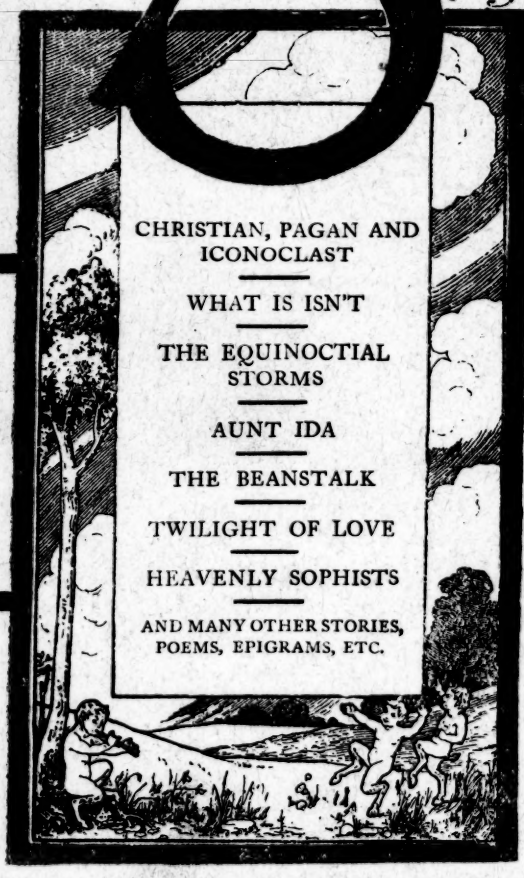
Vol 59

THE SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

To Amuse, Not to Instruct



CHRISTIAN, PAGAN AND ICONOCLAST

WHAT IS ISN'T

THE EQUINOCTIAL STORMS

AUNT IDA

THE BEANSTALK

TWILIGHT OF LOVE

HEAVENLY SOPHISTS

AND MANY OTHER STORIES, POEMS, EPIGRAMS, ETC.

DECEMBER 1919

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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Editor—J. W. MILNE

DECEMBER, 1919

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MOURNFUL FOR MONKEYS

By

H. DENNIS BRADLEY.

"Conscription"

MY playful philosophies are never remarkable for tolerance towards Old Men. And being true to my generation I censure the futilities of Age as pungently as I shall criticise the follies of Youth when I grow old, if ever.

This is one of the joys of being Irish.

We are perpetually threatened with a New World, although, early 1914 wasn't a bad one. To add to the horrors of our butterless Peace it is claimed by Dr. Veronoff that the grafting of the interstitial gland of a monkey on an old man will bring back his exhausted force and lost youth, and restore his physical and moral vigour.

The experiments have proved wonderful. A decrepid ram, equal in age to a man of seventy, underwent rejuvenation and pranced about with youthful joy. Deprived of the grafted glands the ram returned to its senile condition. Which, was, of course, rather rough on the ram. The possibilities are boundless.

It will be inspiring to see our Cabinet Ministers on a spring morning gaily tangoing down Downing Street and ecstatically humming amorous love songs. And when they break their pledges we shall deprive them of their monkey glands and let them return to their previously unpleasant condition—which was the fate of the poor ram.

And when the Old Men start their next glorious war Youth will conscript all monkeys. Then the newly glanded Old shall have the privilege to be the first to prance gaily "over the top" with starry eyes. Let us hope there will be no monkey shortage.

Another experiment of Dr. Veronoff was the grafting of the thyroid body taken from a monkey to an idiot boy. Two years later he joined the army. Oh, Mars, was this a proof of sanity?

From the scientific point of view the discovery is absorbing. I shall welcome the physical rejuvenation of our Old Men, even though their monkeyfied mentality of necessity remains unchanged.

* * * * *

At present Pope and Bradley's clientele entirely consists of young and virile men. The styles of the house are not suited to elderly or obese figures. Grafted glands may, however, create a new connection. Meanwhile, prices still defy a Profiteering Tribunal. Lounge suits from £10 10s. Dinner Suits from £14 14s. Overcoats from £10 10s.

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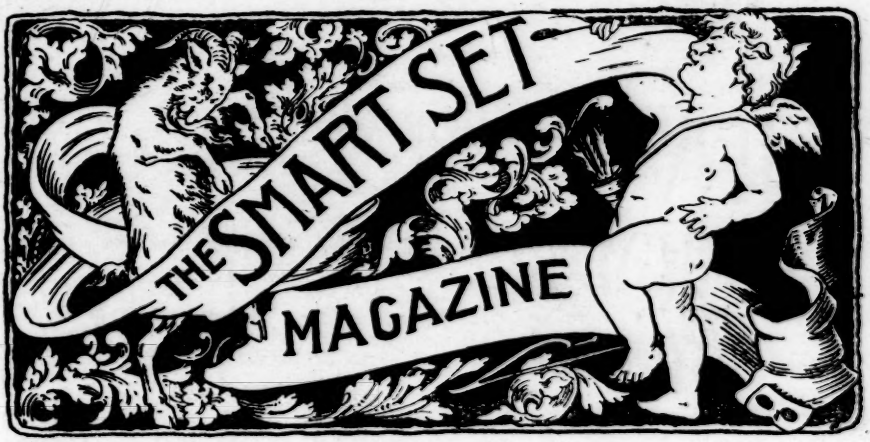

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CHRISTIAN, PAGAN AND ICONOCLAST

By Gorham B. Munson

I

A FLY was enmeshed in a huge spider-web. It closed its eyes, breathed as little as possible, and gave itself up to hopes of a miraculous escape, a blissful contemplation of an unmarred sugar-bowl carnival, and the picture of a great bonfire of black spiders. After a while the silent spider ran out and devoured the fly.

II

ANOTHER fly was enmeshed in the same huge web. It gazed with wonder at the random shafts of sunlight which fell in its dark corner, it admired the delicate strength of the circling web, it inhaled with joy the scented air of the hay-loft, it listened intently to the occasional harmonies bandied about by the wind. After a while the silent spider ran out and devoured the fly.

III

STILL another fly was enmeshed in the huge web. It thrashed its wings, it wrenched its body, it kicked its legs. The web yielded here and there and shook tremulously at the utmost exertions of the victim. After a while the silent spider ran out and devoured the fly.

TELEGRAMS

By Agnes Miller

I HAVE a friend who is a telegraph operator.

Once I asked him what most telegrams were about.

"All telegrams," he replied, "are about one of two subjects: money or kisses."

"The second," I suggested, "no doubt always acknowledge the first?"

"Never. They serve either as a request for the first or as a reply to the request."

"And the first?"

"That may be either an acknowledgment of or a request for the second."

"And do both," I inquired, "ever appear together in one telegram?"

My friend, the operator, smiled.

"Only," he answered, "in messages sent by the poor."

WITCH-FIRE

By George Sterling

SAID the faun to the will-o'-the-wisp:
"You are fugitive, far!"
Said the will-o'-the-wisp to the faun:
"But more near than the star."

Said the faun to the will-o'-the-wisp:
"You are white, you are cold!"
Said the will-o'-the-wisp to the faun:
"I am fire to the bold."

Said the faun to the will-o'-the-wisp:
"You are fey, you are fair!"
Said the will-o'-the-wisp to the faun:
"If I be, have a care!"

It was far on the marsh that she fled;
It was far from the dawn.
Now the winds of the morning have found
Not her light nor the faun.

WHAT IS ISN'T

By Charles Stoke Wayne

CHAPTER I

WHEN Lee Calvert, defying a discretion hitherto regarded as obligatory, rang boldly the door-bell of the Elliot Holland home in East Sixty-first Street, and, having asked for Mrs. Holland, handed the servant his card, he forged a link in the chain which was eventually to shackle him.

That he did it unwittingly, not being gifted with ability accurately to foresee the future, is scarcely worth considering, since an infallible prescience would probably not have deterred him. Circumstances had arisen which he felt made the call imperative. Consequences, likely or unlikely—such was the emotional turmoil of the moment—he had no thought for.

Save, however, for an unusual pallor, there was nothing in his appearance to indicate the nervous strain he was undergoing. A rather tall, well-proportioned young man, noticeably good-looking, carefully—almost meticulously—groomed and smartly dressed, the gaze of his blue-grey eyes as it met the enquiring look of the maid was unwaveringly direct, and the movement of his gloved hand in presenting the card was markedly steady.

But, waiting in the small reception-room to the left of the entrance hall, and released from observation, his self-command was less perfect. Still holding his hat and walking-stick, he moved about restlessly, with bent head and furrowed brow. In the five minutes' interval before the maid's return he twice glanced at his watch, and for the first time a fear loomed that Bianca might decline to see him.

This, though, was eventually dissipated. It ended in his being led up a broad, curving staircase and along a softly carpeted corridor to an open door before which his guide halted and, with a gracefully indicative gesture, stepped aside.

The next instant he was facing Bianca Holland.

In every conceivable sense this woman was to Calvert the most desirable of God's creatures. Even the more indifferent men conceded her beauty and her charm. Nearly as tall as himself, her figure had all the slender, sinuous symmetry of a hamadryad, its lines enhanced now by the teagown she was wearing: a pale, filmy fabric which seemed to hold in its folds the faint silver grey of earliest dawn, just as the night seemed captive in her hair, and starshine in the depths of her large, dark, languorous eyes.

The room, though he failed to observe it, was a fit setting for this jewel he so highly prized. It was cosily small, half boudoir and half library, with no striking, glaring colour anywhere, but a blending of tints that suggested nothing so much as a great hollowed-out opal.

Before either uttered a word he had read in her look—in her shadowy smile, in the faint parting of her sensuous, sensitive lips—not reproach, but question. In this wise he answered it:

"I had to come. There was no other way."

For reply she gave him her hand, and its soft, warm pressure said very distinctly:

"I know. I understand."

Stepping past him, she closed the door, and spoke actually.

"Here, Lee, we shall be quite safe from interruption."

Against the wall to the right was a dainty little sofa-like thing of white enamel and lavender satin, whereon they sat down.

"I've tried, Bee," he said, dismally. "It's no use. I can't keep my promise. For twenty-four hours I've been in purgatory. Either you must find some way of getting out of going or release me from my promise not to follow you."

"But, my dear," she rejoined, not unkindly, "don't you see how impossible either is? What would happen?"

"You mean your husband's suspicions would be confirmed?"

"Unquestionably."

"Well! Let them. Better still, tell him the truth. Confess you no longer love him. Ask him to free you."

"Oh, my dear!"

It was not the first time he had asked her this—no, nor the hundredth—but never before had so much hung between consent and refusal. In the two years of their love—of their passion, mutually avowed, yet ungratified and wrapped in what they had believed to be an impenetrable secrecy—there had been only the briefest separations. A week had measured the longest. And for being mostly behind a veil their meetings were all the sweeter. In the clandestine there is zest.

But there had come a time now when, some whisper or some intuitive conviction of the truth having penetrated, at least vaguely, to the Elliot Holland consciousness, Bianca was, after but five days' warning, to be taken abroad.

To Calvert, therefore, her exclamatory protest in response to this ultimate and paramount voicing of his old appeal was like a sudden knife-thrust at his last hope. He winced visibly, and a swift colour dyed his cheeks to the temples. The next instant, though, the flush receded; and he bent forward, burying his face in his palms.

Into Bianca's expressive eyes there came then a cloud of pity masking the starshine. It was with a gesture of pleading that she laid, yearningly, a hand upon his slanted shoulder.

"Lee!" she murmured. "Don't! Please don't!"

She could feel the slow, deep rhythm of his breathing. And it seemed to her the full-pulsed throbbing of his heart in pain. He gave her no reply, and she went on:

"I'd do it—oh, so willingly, so gladly!—if there were the tiniest use. But I know him so well. It would only make matters worse—a thousand times worse."

"Worse?" he echoed into his cupped palms. "As if anything could be!"

"But, think, dear. It's not for long. Two months perhaps. Three at the most. He must be back by the middle of January. There's a——"

He straightened quickly and turned to her, his eyes blazing.

"Look at me!" he cried, sternly. "Look at me, and say that again!"

She looked at him, and, looking, quailed. Her gaze fell and she sat mute.

"Three months not long!" he repeated. "Not long? One month to me would be eternity. If you loved me half as much as I love you you couldn't think of it."

Her eyes narrowed. The line of her lips straightened. She held her breath as if in pain.

"Do you want to drive me quite mad?" he went on. "I'm not far from it now."

Abruptly she recovered herself.

"It's because I love you so dearly that I can face it bravely. If I had no thought but my own selfish desires, I'd have been yours long ago. Wholly yours. We'd have been at the world's end by now."

"Would to God we were!" he returned fervently.

"Oh, don't say that!" she begged. "You know that no lasting happiness

could come of it. A delirium of joy and——"

"Yes. And—what?"

"The awakening. Exiles. Satiety. Reproaches. Probably hate."

"Nonsense! That's only a morbid fancy."

"I'm sorry you think so, Lee. But it's the only way I can see it. Intuition tells me we must wait."

For the briefest moment he sat gazing at her in wistful silence. Never had she appeared to him so beautiful, so adorably desirable. His whole being ached to possess her. The subtle perfume she exhaled, like the scent of flowers, warm and sweet, intoxicated him. Then, abruptly, his arms were about her, he had drawn her close, his lips were avidly upon hers. And swift as winged darts the ardent seconds sped.

It was she, at length, who all at once drew away, startled.

"I heard something," she whispered.

Calvert's smile was indulgent.

"You're full of fancies to-day, darling," he told her softly.

But she lifted a cautioning finger.

"No," she breathed, still nervous with alarm. "Someone jarred the door."

"A draft probably."

Already she was on her feet and crossing the room. Precipitately she turned the knob, drawing the door inward. The corridor was empty.

"You see," he said.

"Still, I'm unconvinced," was her rejoinder.

Again he smiled. "You *are* morbid to-day."

"But if Elliot should come in unexpectedly! Think of it."

"Very well. Suppose he should. All the better. He'd learn for himself then what you refuse to tell him."

"That would be far worse," she declared. "There is but one way, as I've told you. We must wait."

"For what? Until when?"

"I've already told you for what. We've spoken of it many times. How can I say when? But it won't be long, dear. I feel that."

"Your feeling isn't much to tie to. We may have to wait for years for the apoplexy he's been cautioned against."

"I won't talk of it," she said, dropping limply into a chair.

"Because you really have no more faith in it than I. Vanderslice is an alarmist. And Holland's right in giving his warning little heed. He's too young a man to have brittle arteries. Forty-five isn't old any more."

"Oh, why will you make me go over that again?" She had turned to him imploringly. "Dr. Vanderslice is not an alarmist. He named a dozen men at least we've known, no older than Elliot, who went in that way. But *he* refuses to be careful. He eats and drinks what he likes, takes practically no exercise, and makes no effort whatever to control his temper. There can, I tell you, be but one end. I've urged him to be careful until I——"

Calvert, frowning, caught her up.

"You've urged him?" he cried.

"Naturally. Would you have me do otherwise?"

"I couldn't have done it."

"That's the one reason why I've asked you not to come here. If you should meet what might not happen? This way my conscience is clear."

"My conscience is less sensitive." And once more a smile—this time but a faint one—lifted slightly the corners of his sensitive clean-shaven mouth.

"Lee!"

"Oh, I admit it. Why lie? Naturally I want him out of the way. He's standing in the middle of the road to my happiness and yours. We might push him aside, but you won't have that. You are determined that we shan't go on until he's dead. It is you, my dear, who make that condition. Not I."

Again Adam was blaming Eve for his temptation. But, if Eve had any defence ready, she was prevented from voicing it by the falling at that moment of a light tap on the door. Calvert impulsively sprang up. But it was only a maid with tea.

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"My conscience is less sensitive." And once more a smile—this time but a faint one—lifted slightly the corners of his sensitive clean-shaven mouth.

"Lee!"

"Oh, I admit it. Why lie? Naturally I want him out of the way. He's standing in the middle of the road to my happiness and yours. We might push him aside, but you won't have that. You are determined that we shan't go on until he's dead. It is you, my dear, who make that condition. Not I."

Again Adam was blaming Eve for his temptation. But, if Eve had any defence ready, she was prevented from voicing it by the falling at that moment of a light tap on the door. Calvert impulsively sprang up. But it was only a maid with tea.

When she was gone and he held a cup in his hand he said:

"Why did you say we'd be safe from interruption here, if there was a possibility of him returning at any moment or of tea being brought in?"

"Because the possibilities were most remote. Ordinarily he's rarely home before seven. Even then he doesn't come here. To-night we are dining at his brother's. He'll be in earlier, but I shall not expect him before six. When I heard that movement of the door, though, it occurred to me that he might possibly have come and asked for me, and that one of the maids had, unthinkingly, mentioned your name. A guilty conscience, you know. As for the tea, I had ordered that for five-thirty."

Calvert glanced at the bijou of a timepiece on Bianca's escritoire across the room. It indicated five-forty.

"Unless I wish to precipitate an apoplectic seizure and so hasten our happiness I'd better be off pretty quickly then," he said.

"I think you'll be safe until six," she returned lightly.

"Suppose I refuse to go until you promise to release me from my agreement not to follow you to the other side."

"You mustn't ask that, dear."

"But I do ask it. That's why I'm here. My mind is made up. I won't wait three months. No, nor one month either. I can't endure the thought of it. I'm going to follow you by the next boat."

"You mean you'll break your word?"

"No. I mean you must release me."

"But I can't. Surely you won't make it so hard for me. I'd never have a moment's peace."

"But if I agree to be most careful? There's no reason why we shouldn't be able to see each other in London and Paris, or wherever you go, quite as secretly as here in New York."

For ten minutes they argued without reaching agreement. In the end, his eyes on the little clock, Calvert said:

"Very well. You shall have until to-morrow to think it over further."

"We go aboard to-morrow night, you know," Bianca told him. "And sail early Thursday morning."

"I understand that. But you'll lunch with me to-morrow."

"If nothing happens, yes."

"What can happen?"

"Anything. Aren't we on the knees of the gods?"

"Do you want to drive me quite dotty? If you're not at Giro's at one, I'll come here. If you're not here I'll be at the pier when you arrive, and I'll kiss you good-bye right under his nose. Yes, if it kills him."

"I know of nothing to keep me from being at Giro's at one."

"That's better," he said, smiling as he put down his cup. "And at Giro's you'll free me from my agreement. You must, darling."

"I can't do that, ever. Oh, Lee, you must see it my way! You must bear it bravely as I am bearing it."

"You won't change?"

"I won't change."

"Nor will I."

He seized her almost roughly in one long final embrace, kissed her again and again, and the next moment was running lightly down the broad, curving staircase. Snatching up his hat and walking-stick from the hall-table, where, in thoughtless indiscretion, he had left them, he passed out through the door held open by the maid and turned towards Fifth Avenue.

Still deeply absorbed in his problem, his eyes on vacancy, he quite failed to observe the limousine which, at the moment his feet touched the sidewalk, was already drawing in before the Holland residence.

Elliot Holland's faculties, however—he being less singly engrossed—were more generally alert. He not only observed the emerging caller, he identified him.

CHAPTER II

GIRO'S, as any sophisticated New Yorker will tell you, is an Italian res-

taurant with a high-class Italian clientèle. Outwardly unpretentious, snuggled cozily between taller brownstone fronts on a cross-street off Broadway in the vicinity of Lincoln Square, it is of another world from that of Park Avenue and its nabobs, which is but little less than a mile to the eastward. Yet rarely does the Italian ambassador forego at least one dinner at Giro's on the occasions of his metropolitan visits, and the prince of operatic tenors is a regular patron.

As a rendezvous for young Calvert and Bianca Holland it very nearly approached the ideal. While near enough to their homes to be convenient of access, detection was the most remote of possibilities, yet it provided invariably a variedly delicious menu and the service was as enticingly perfect as that of the smartest restaurant in the city.

On the day following his indiscreet visit to the Holland home Calvert arrived at Giro's some minutes in advance of the appointed hour of one. As was his habit, he avoided the larger front room, preferring to reach the smaller one in the rear by means of the connecting side-passage, rather than risk the thousandth chance of recognition.

Their table—the one to which they had been directed on their initial visit, more than a year ago and which on subsequent occasions he had invariably reserved by telephone—was located in a partially curtained alcove, and not until he was under the alcove arch did he see that it was unoccupied.

In his impatience, overestimating the time involved in the journey from his Wall Street office, he imagined himself late, and the absence of Bianca, in its first effect, was a sickening let-down.

"If nothing happens," she had said.

And there recurred to him too that phrase of hers: "We are on the knees of the gods."

But, consulting his watch, he was reassured. She had still six minutes.

He sat down and of the hovering waiter ordered a cocktail. When it was brought and he had drunk it and lighted a cigarette, he heard a clock in the front room strike one. From that moment he began counting the minutes. The fact that she was rarely punctual somehow gave him little consolation. To-day was not like other days.

"If you are not there at one," he had told her, "I'll come here."

He had meant that. He still meant it. But he must, he supposed, give her some grace. It would only mess things up to go and miss her. The question was: how long should he wait?

He contented himself for five minutes, his eyes fastened on the edge of the curtain in constant expectation. Then he gave her five minutes more. When it was half gone he resolved that he would not wait beyond the quarter-hour.

He began tapping on the table with the edge of the menu-card, estimating each tap as a second. In this way he counted two minutes more. He had begun on the third minute when she came.

Curiously enough, he was actually surprised to see her. His hope had become attenuated to that degree. He rose but he had no words.

"I'm awfully sorry," she was saying, "but I couldn't get here a second sooner. At the last minute Cecile insisted on another fitting of one of my frocks, and I was late getting to her because—But you must know, yourself, Lee, how it is. There are always a hundred things to do the last day."

"So long as you're here it's all right," he smiled. "But I nearly had the willies waiting."

He had forestalled the waiter by taking her wrap and drawing out her chair for her. And now, when she was seated, he availed himself of the opportunity, still standing behind her, to touch with appreciatively caressing hand the velvet of her throat and cheek.

By neither a jot nor tittle had he receded from his determination of the previous day to follow her abroad, whether or no. But he had no intention to mar their luncheon hour by introducing the subject before dessert.

And in order to guard against any possible broaching of it on her part, he had predetermined his initial topic even to the extent of holding in mind his opening sentence.

Curiously enough, though, when the order had been given and they were alone, they both spoke at once, and both in identically the same words:

"I've something to tell you."

Then, in chorus, they laughed at the coincidence. And never to Calvert, watching her, had Bianca been, he thought, just like this. Yesterday he had fancied her eclipsing all past radiances of desirability. But to-day her loveliness held for him an added charm. Her skin was fairer, clearer, more delicately tinted. Her eyes brighter, yet brimming more with the love he craved above all things. And he sobered abruptly under the distress of the realization that, should he have permitted her to have her way, he would now be looking at her for the last time for what would seem at least a century.

It was in the hope that she might mean to tell him she had yielded that he granted her the precedence he had so jealously striven to keep.

"Very well, dear," he said. "My story can wait."

"Elliot saw you yesterday." That was her news.

"Saw me?"

"Yes. Leaving the house."

"There were no fatal results?"

"How do you know? There might have been."

"I saw him an hour ago, myself. He was quite fit then. Well, what happened?"

"He said that it was evident he was not taking me away any too soon."

"Was that all?"

"It was quite enough as he said it. But it wasn't all. He called you some horrid names."

"And you, too?"

"Oh, no! He blamed himself rather. He said he never questioned my fidelity. I'm too cold a woman to lose my head. But in the long run even I might prove not altogether immune to the flattery of an unscrupulous libertine. He was glad he had taken steps in time to save me."

"What a cur!" Calvert muttered. "Still, I'm glad he saw me. I'm glad he regarded me as dangerous. It must have added to his sense of insecurity. What a fool to think that by taking you abroad he can alter the situation any!"

"He doesn't understand, you see. His vanity is something prodigious. He imagines that by devotion, at this late day, he can make me forget you."

Calvert's mouth twitched under the stab of that "by devotion" and the lancinating pang it inflicted.

"Good God!" he murmured through teeth tight-closed. "The thought of you going to—to *that!*"

She leant nearer to him, pressing against the table-edge.

"Oh, Lee!" she breathed sympathetically. "You have nothing to fear. You know you haven't."

"It isn't that I doubt you," he protested. "You can't think that. It's only the thought of to what you'll be subjected. To his kisses and embraces. Every minute I'll be picturing you in his arms. I know what the torture will be."

"But you're exaggerating it. Elliot isn't like you. He's seldom demonstrative. And I! You wouldn't know me if you could see me with him. I'm glacial. I am, really!"

"Stop!" he commanded. "Stop! You're only making it worse." And almost savagely he ground out the red cinder of his cigarette in the basin of the little iron match-stand.

For a little space neither spoke. Bianca, her eyes all pity, gazed at his drawn profile as he sat with face averted, his chin lowered, and his eyes fixed on the red velvet carpet.

Presently she said:

"But you had something to tell me. What is it? I'm curious."

It was all of half a minute before he responded. Then he faced her once more.

"Oh, that!" he said. "It was only

that I called on your husband this morning."

She started at the words, caught her breath with a little gulp, and her eyes widened.

"You—you called——?" she began.

"Yes. But don't be alarmed. We had no words. You weren't mentioned. Because all our messengers were out, I, like a fool, volunteered to deliver the letter of credit that he's to pay your expenses with on the other side. I was going that way, and I fancied that I'd only have to hand it to his managing clerk."

"But?"

"He'd left instructions that the messenger should be shown in. Under the circumstances I couldn't very well refuse. Could I?"

"But I don't understand why he——"

"Wanted to make sure that it was all right, I suppose. So as to avoid further delay if it wasn't."

"And was it?"

"Naturally. Our house rarely makes errors. We've been too long at the game. But if there had been a mistake in every line he'd never have detected one. It was most amusing. He pretended to look it over, but my presence rattled him. Didn't take in a word he was reading. And I just stood there watching his face grow redder and redder by the minute, and wishing to God that a little vein might burst in his brain and hurry him to Kingdom Come. I must have laughed aloud at his vexation—at his obvious discomfiture—if I hadn't been so intent on that wish."

"Oh, Lee!"

"It's the truth. Why shouldn't I confess it? Ordinarily I'm not a very good hater, Bee. But if hating could kill Elliot Holland he'd be dead at this minute."

"My dearest!" There was hurt as well as deprecation in her tone. "I wish you wouldn't say such things. Our love should be above hatred." And her lip quivered.

The waiter came then and Calvert was perforce silent. When, having placed the Blue Points before them, the waiter once more effaced himself, the ardent young lover, on second thought, suppressed his intended defence.

"I hope you have nothing to-day to hurry away for," he said instead. And it was with a little temporary glow of satisfaction that he heard her answer:

"Nothing. The whole afternoon is yours, if you want it."

"Want it!" he echoed. "It can be measured by minutes, and I long for the immeasurable."

An half-hour passed. They were picking at breasts of quail, broiled to a turn under crisp bacon strips, and sipping a dry, still wine which imparted a certain temporary warmth of contentment, when a sudden jangle of brass curtain-rings and a swift movement aside of the crimson plush hangings at Bianca's back caused them both to start.

Calvert, abruptly apprehensive, lifted his gaze and Bianca's lovely head executed a quick turn. So that, simultaneously, they were conscious of their invaded privacy.

A tall, thin, gentlemanly appearing man, Vandyke-bearded and slightly bald, was regarding them from the middle of the archway. Both recognized him. He was Elliot Holland's elder brother, Robert. Both, too, were instantly aware of a stern gravity of visage which communicated something more unusual than simple alarm. And both were mute under the weight of it.

Nor did he either bow or speak until, advancing, he stood between them at the table's end. And then he addressed Bianca.

"I have been trying to locate you since twelve-thirty," he said in a voice ominously hushed. "Something tragic has happened."

Calvert's eyes went to the face of the woman he loved. It was white as paper and she was staring frightenedly at her brother-in-law.

"Elliot?" she questioned, breathing the name.

He nodded.

Calvert got to his feet. There was

but one inference. Holland was dead. His wish had come true. But he experienced no delight. The shock of it numbed him. The scene in which he was taking part seemed like a dream, in which Bianca's white face and tearless, piteous eyes dominated everything.

"I have a taxi waiting," he heard Robert Holland say.

He saw the white face rise. It appeared to him to float upward. He took a step. Her wrap! But already it was in Holland's hands. He was holding it for her.

"If there's anything I can——" he began.

But no one paid him the slightest attention.

The two figures moved away, silently.

The curtains swayed, were swept aside, fell back into their places. He was alone beside the table in the alcove.

CHAPTER III

It occurred to Lee Calvert, later, as the taxicab in which he was being driven to his club whirled recklessly through Columbus Circle, that Robert Holland, after that first look from the archway, had not once turned his face to him. And he smiled to himself, with a partially recovered and momentarily quickening complacency, at his presumptuous egotism in imagining that he would.

It was not unlikely that his brother had taken him into his confidence. But, even if this were not so, the bare fact of his sister-in-law lunching tête-à-tête in an obscure restaurant with a man much his brother's junior would have been sufficient, and especially at such a time, to provoke his antagonism.

He was willing, in view of the circumstances, to make for Bianca every possible allowance. It was but natural that, crushed to a stupor by the suddenness of the tidings, she should have been so obsessed by them as to lose perception of everything else. Even he, himself, had been nearly knocked out by it. Nevertheless, as he now calmly reviewed the episode, he could not wholly assuage the hurt of her total inobservance. There was no getting away from the fact that she had forgotten him entirely and left him without either a glance or a word.

But not until later, at the club, with the earlier editions of the evening papers about him, did the possibility occur to him that it might, after all, have been other than mere forgetting. That it might, indeed, have been in recollection and horror of those idly spoken words at the table about wishing a little cerebral vein would break, and then: "If hating would kill . . . he'd be dead this minute."

"Suppose," he thought, "she should believe that! That hating can kill! And that my hating killed him!"

No two of the newspaper stories were quite the same. Still, they all agreed pretty well as to the time, and it was very evident to Calvert that the apoplectic stroke—they were unanimous on apoplexy as the cause—must have almost immediately followed his call.

He remembered looking at his watch as he came down in the elevator, and that it was ten minutes or so after twelve. He had been anxious then about his appointment at Giro's, for he had still another call to make, and there was no telling, with the crowded traffic conditions, how long it would take him to get uptown by taxi.

And the papers had it that Manning, the managing clerk, found Elliot Holland apparently lifeless upon entering his office at quarter-past twelve.

The more Calvert thought about this small margin the less he liked it. Fortunately none of the accounts mentioned his name. But he had told Bianca, and women were, in a way, such undependable creatures. They were given, at times, to the weirdest sort of fancies which they denominated intuitions.

Here the very thing had happened that he most wished for—or thought he did—and it might prove disastrous.

Now that Holland was gone he actually wished him back. If he had only not insisted on taking to him that letter of credit! Filson, the chief clerk of the department, had been reluctant to let him. There'd be a boy available in half an hour, he said. But—yes, he'd insisted. He wanted to see Holland before he sailed. He had told Bianca he didn't expect to. But he did. He would have been disappointed if he had not. Knowing that he possessed the love of this man's wife, his craving was to face him, and silently to gloat over him. And in his heart he had said, watching the husband's discomfiture:

"You may take her away from me in body, but in spirit we'll still be together, because we belong to one another."

He had come away triumphant, exulting in the conviction that he held the upper hand, and that nothing could displace him. And here, but two hours later, Death was mocking him. Elliot Holland, dead, was usurping his supremacy.

He touched the bell on the table, and when a waiter responded he ordered a highball. The club lounge was nearly deserted. In one corner three men—probably new members—whom he did not know, were in interested converse. Unconsciously, after lighting a fresh cigarette—he had been smoking incessantly—his gaze lingered upon them. It rested there when the waiter reappeared with his tray and the clink of glass broke in upon his abstraction.

But, when his drink had been mixed and was at his lips, a voice, high-pitched and penetrating, drew his attention once more to that corner. A fourth man had joined the others, was standing beside them, and it was he who was speaking.

"Yes. Everybody's talking of it downtown," Calvert heard. "Most sensational thing that's happened in years. It came out on the ticker first, you know, as apoplexy. All the papers had it that. But there seems no doubt now that the poor chap was *murdered*."

Calvert's glass slipped from his suddenly nerveless fingers, struck the rounded leather arm of his chair, and dropped to the floor. It didn't break—the thickness of the rug saved it—but there was a tinkling reverberation, and the speaker looked around.

He saw Calvert bending to recover it. Then he went on:

"No doubt of it. Stabbed, they say, with a hatpin or something like it. That's all that's definite. But there's no end of theories."

Having returned his empty glass to the silvered tray, Lee Calvert rose from his chair and stood a moment, attacked by a sensation of giddiness that was new to him. Objects were circling and there was an unwonted sense of fulness in his head. He rested a hand on the chair-back and so steadied himself. The vertigo, or whatever it was, passed.

He told himself that he needed air. The lounge was hot and close. In the reception hall he turned to the coat-room window on his right and was waiting for his overcoat, hat and walking-stick when he heard behind him the words:

"There's Mr. Calvert now, sir."

He wheeled sharply, facing a heavy-set, red-haired and moustached man in a dark grey coat and soft hat; and knew instantly his errand. It was preposterous, of course. Absurd and most aggravating. But it was equally unavoidable. He was about to be arrested.

Superbly he pulled himself together. He even managed a smile of greeting.

"In just a moment," he said. "The boy's getting my things. Then I'll go with you."

To onlookers it must appear that the burly caller had come by appointment.

CHAPTER IV

EMERGING in a measure from her daze in the taxicab, with Robert Holland, silent and sombre, beside her, there was one question which rose paramount in the mind of Bianca and

clamoured for answer. And, strangely enough, it was a question which, in his pondering, had not once addressed itself to Calvert. She was perplexed beyond measure to know how her brother-in-law had, even after that hour and more of delay, discovered that she was at Giro's.

And it was not till the day was spent —that awful afternoon of crowding privileged callers: close relatives of Elliot's and her own; and that evening of crowding memories—that her curiosity was satisfied. Much as she wished to know, she would have sacrificed her tongue rather than ask Robert Holland. And he was the last man to have volunteered information on, to him, so delicate a matter.

Throughout the ordeal of that premature and precipitate home-coming; succeeded by that seemingly endless listening to a detailed narrative of just what had happened at the law offices, preceding and following the discovery of the sagging, lifeless body in the revolving chair; and finally the exchange of expressions of sympathy and condolence with kinsfolk; Bianca, after the initial shock of surprise, bore herself with commendable bravery.

Tactfully, she managed by sheer force of will to steer a middle course between an exhibition of too much feeling and of too little. Gaining thus for herself undeserved commendation for her admirable self-control in the face of an overwhelming sorrow, and avoiding the criticism of the captious for lack of emotion, not to say heartlessness.

For the expenditure of nervous force involved in this successful endeavour, however, she had subsequently to pay. With the departure of the last visitor there descended upon her an avalanche of imaginings, born of swift reaction. The objective gave place to the subjective. She became the prey of her own introspection. She had been, if not unfaithful in the larger acceptation of that term, certainly undutiful. Self-reproach seized upon her and exacted its measure of requital. She was haunted by her dead.

In her opal-tinted boudoir, to which she had fled at the first moment of freedom, her husband awaited her. He moved constantly before her. He was in every chair. He sat where yesterday Lee Calvert had sat beside her on the small white and lavender sofa. And always, though he spoke no word, there was accusation in the fixed stare of his small, misty grey eyes. Accusation and reproach.

As in a panorama there unrolled before her scene after scene of their life together, the four years of which were crowded into a space of minutes. There was, too, their first meeting at a Newport garden party, recalling her hasty appraisement of him and her utter indifference. It was followed by his proposal on the moonlit deck of his yacht; her reluctance to wound him with a definite refusal, and the subsequent appeal of her mother not idly to reject so advantageous an opportunity. With a keen pang of reflected memory she saw again her wedding and her monstrously miscalled honeymoon, and all the horrid pictures of her direful awakening to the bondage of a marriage on which Eros frowned.

How often in those early months had she wished herself dead! How many times had she considered the ways and means of self-destruction and yet been too cowardly to put them to practice! And then, after the coming into her life of Lee Calvert, how wondrously had she changed! No longer was there anything desirable in death—her own death. She wanted life then; life at its full. And presently she had come to realize that nothing but divorce or Elliot Holland's death could give it to her.

The former, she very soon learned, must be regarded as even a more remote possibility than the latter. Her parents were of that conservative element which frowns upon the legal rupture of the marriage tie as both an immorality and a sacrilege. And her husband, an egoist of egoists, as well as a strange admixture of ice and quick, fierce flame, would release her only up-

on the most direct evidence of disloyalty.

Yesterday was not the first time that she had heard Lee wish him dead. They rarely met that he didn't. And, though she never failed to rebuke him, she was conscious now that she, too, silently and treacherously, for more than two years, had entertained the same desire. So, looking, as she was forced to look, into that accusing, reproachful, ghostly face ever before her, it was this which gave to it its greatest power of torture.

In an effort to exorcise the obsession, Bianca rang for her maid.

Marie Bourgois, long in her service, was a spare, active, grey-haired woman of forty-odd, efficient to a degree, kind-hearted and sympathetic, yet with an abundance of stern common sense.

"Ah, madame!" she crooned, as one glance at her mistress's tortured eyes touched a tender spot in her. "It is not right that you should be alone."

It was on Bianca's tongue-tip to say:

"But it's because I'm not alone that I'm miserable."

She said instead, however:

"I wanted to be. Nevertheless, you are right, Marie. When I am alone I think and think. Oh, such horrid things! And my brain won't stop. It's like a wound-up machine. If I could only sleep!"

"Madame shall sleep," Marie assured her. "It is that you have given yourself too much to those people, when you should have sent for *le docteur* and gone straight to bed. But a warm bath, perhaps, and if I brush Madame's hair. Yes?"

And Bianca agreeing the maid became instantly busy.

Emerging from the bath, the young widow of hours was encouraged to find that she could now look at the little sofa or any one of the chairs without seeing it occupied. Her visitant had left her. And, thus relieved, when comfortably seated with cushions at her back and Marie occupied with her hair-brush, the question of the taxicab recurred and once more clamoured for answer.

"Tell me, Marie," she said, "how poor Monsieur's brother ascertained where I was, so as to bring me the bad news."

"Ah, that! It was most simple, madame. No one here knew, of course. But when I told him Madame, always considerate, had preferred to employ a taxi rather than take out poor Griggs, the chauffeur, who was still weak from the *grippe*, he had but to ask the company from which it was ordered. As it was I who called up for Madame, I knew and I gave him the number. But the taxi had not returned. So we had to wait, leaving instructions that when it came in it should be sent here again at once, with the same driver."

Bianca said nothing. And Marie, expecting a word of praise for the way she had shared in the accomplishment, asked:

"Was it not well, madame?"

"Well? Oh, yes, Marie. Very well," she answered.

It was really her maid's first indiscretion. But the circumstances were extraordinary and she could not blame her.

Still she was uncomfortable over the revelation it involved. She was oppressed by a fear that Robert Holland might make use of it. She did not believe him friendly to her.

A conviction was strong upon her that he was in his brother's confidence, and if he cared to he could make her position decidedly unpleasant by circulating the story that he had found her, following her husband's tragic death, lunching surreptitiously with Mr. Calvert in an Italian restaurant.

But with all her misgivings she had not the vaguest notion as to how this incident was eventually to develop. For, by good fortune more than good management, the news of Calvert's arrest and the charge of murder had not yet reached her. She was still under the impression that her husband had died, naturally, of apoplexy, just as

Dr. Vanderslice had warned he might, and as she always imagined he would.

CHAPTER V

THE more sensational newspapers of Thursday morning printed diagrams of the Holland, Delray and Dallas law offices on the sixteenth floor of one of the taller labyrinthine buildings of lower Broadway. In one respect, at least, they differed from the average offices of their size in possessing but one entrance. And stress was laid upon this point in order to impress upon readers the fact that whoever was guilty of Mr. Holland's untimely taking off, must have come and gone by that door.

A dotted line had been drawn to indicate the course of a caller seeking the senior member of the law firm. It began in the corridor, where he would step from one of the elevators, and continued thence to this single means of access, twenty yards distant. Crossing the sill he would then, it showed, find himself within a small, oblong, railed-off space, and facing a little table at which sat, usually, the office boy whose duty it was to attend to callers.

"Assuming that he has an appointment with Mr. Holland," the newspaper continued, "he passes through a swinging gate at his left and crosses this outer office, given over to clerks, accountants, stenographers, and the telephone operator at her switchboard, and enters through a green baize-covered door, punctured by a glass oval, the office library. It is an oblong room, its right and far walls hidden by serried files of calf-bound law reports in cases reaching to the ceiling. A partition to the left divides its full length from the private offices of the three firm members, each with its own ground-glass panelled door. The first is that of Mr. Holland, the second of Mr. Delray, and the far one of Mr. Dallas. A green-velvet carpet covers the library floor, and a long directors' table and seven or eight chairs, all of mahogany, constitute, in addition to the bookcases, its furnishing. Above the table a shaded electrolier, always lighted, supplements the scant illumination afforded by the ground glass."

The dotted line of the diagram turned into Mr. Holland's office, and the accompanying letterpress went on to call attention to the fact that, even with the office-door ajar, a person seated at the library table could not see Mr. Holland's desk and chair, which were near the right dividing wall and close to the door connecting with the Delray office.

Lee Calvert, in a Tombs cell, examined the diagrams with an amusedly satiric interest, but read the sensationally coloured accounts of the tragedy with careful and serious attention. Editorially as well as reportorially the press, he gathered, was non-committal. Guardedly it theorized; more boldly it alluded to the obvious necessity of the arrest, recounting the fact that the victim had been found dead five minutes after the departure of the prisoner and that no one apparently had entered the private office in the interim; but the general tendency of all the newspapers was to "play up" the mystery, since the standing of the accused—a junior member of the old and distinguished banking house of Gardener Brothers—was so unimpeachable that, in the absence of motive—and as yet no motive had been ascertained—it was almost inconceivable that he should be guilty.

That, at all events, was the view embodied, nearly verbatim, in the most conservative morning journal of the metropolis, and it was the editorial keynote of all the others. Moreover, it bore out to a nicety the expressed opinion of Owen Wills, his counsel, with whom he had had a long and most encouraging conference following his apprehension at the club and his arraignment at police headquarters.

"There's nothing to it, old chap," Wills had assured him. "It's absurd. Why, in the name of all that's good and bad, should you want to put Elliot Holland, of all persons, out of the way?"

And Calvert had replied, evasively:

"Yes, that's the point. Why?"

But no sooner were the words uttered than he questioned their wisdom. It was not good policy to deceive one's lawyer. Yet how could he tell Wills of his love for Bianca and the pitch to which he had been wrought by her imminent departure for Europe? He had no better, no closer, friend in all New York than Owen. But he had never so much as hinted to him his romantic attachment. Never, probably, had there been a love affair so carefully and successfully guarded.

He had been fearful, therefore, that, in their eager scenting, some one, at least, of the newspapers might have got wind of his secret. And what he had hardly thought of yesterday at the time began to loom larger and larger as a menacing peril.

Suppose Robert Holland should be interviewed and tell where and under what circumstances he had found Bianca! Suppose the maid by whom he was admitted to the Holland house on Tuesday, or the maid who served tea to them together in Bianca's boudoir, should be questioned by some ubiquitous reporter! But, as no one of these things had happened, he was reassured.

After all, it was best that he had said nothing. At any moment, now, the real culprit might be detected and his own release would follow. At the worst it could be only a question of a little while before Wills would get the matter before the Grand Jury, which, because of this lack of motive, would refuse to indict him.

So, altogether, after reading the newspapers, Calvert's spirits rose. Bianca was free and after a year, at most, just to satisfy Mrs. Grundy and the conventions, they would be married. It was, everything considered, not such a great price to pay for such a glorious consummation.

Meanwhile, Owen Wills, dark, dapper, and energetic, with a manner that was both disarming and engaging, had called at the offices of Holland, Delray and Dallas, and was closeted with the last-named.

He had, of course, announced himself as representing Calvert, and had explained his mission by the statement that, after examining the diagrams in the newspapers, he had become interested in that middle office, occupied, he understood, by Mr. Delray.

"Primarily that," he added, "though I should like to have, at first hand, an explicit account of precisely what happened. You know yourself, my dear fellow, how inaccurate and inconsistent the papers are."

George Dallas, a youngish man, slightly bald and wearing shell-rimmed glasses which accentuated a high and beetling brow, yielded with charming grace. From a drawer of his desk he took a documental appearing sheaf of typed sheets of legal cap, backed in blue, and pinned together at the top with brass eyelets.

"I have here," he said, "what are practically affidavits, though not yet executed, of everyone who was in the office yesterday before, at, and after the occurrence. That of Manning, our managing clerk, covers most of the ground. The others are more or less confirmatory. Shall I read it or would you prefer to do so yourself?"

Wills said that if Mr. Dallas would be so good he'd be glad to hear him. Whereupon, leisurely and in a pleasant voice, with a clearness of articulation which Wills envied, he began:

"I'll omit the usual opening. The affiant is Frederick Manning, of — West 106th Street, who has been our managing clerk for five years. He arrived at the office yesterday morning at nine o'clock or thereabouts. He goes on:

"'In the course of the next half hour I had occasion to enter the library. There was no one in it. The doors to Mr. Holland's and Mr. Dallas's offices were open and the offices were unoccupied. Mr. Delray's office door was closed and locked from the library side. Not finding in its place the book I wished and seeing no books in the other

offices, I unlocked Mr. Delray's door, discovered the book on his desk and took it with me, relocking the door.'

"Permit me to explain," Mr. Dallas interrupted his reading to say, "that Mr. Delray has been absent since the first of August, and that his office is rarely used."

Wills nodded, and the reader continued:

"'From that time until my discovery of Mr. Holland's body I was continuously present in the outer office, and saw everyone who entered or left the library and the private offices. Mr. Dallas arrived at 9.40, went in to his office and left again at 9.50 for Special Sessions. Edward Galton, a law student, came in shortly after ten and read in the library until nearly half-past eleven. While he was there, Mr. Holland's brother-in-law, Stephen Arrowsmith, called and asked for Mr. Holland. I told him that I was not certain that Mr. Holland would be down that day, as he was sailing early the next morning for Europe and had about completed all his arrangements for several months' absence. He said he knew that—about his sailing—but that he had a partial engagement to meet him here that morning. He went into the library to wait.

"'It was probably ten minutes later that Mr. Holland got me on the telephone and informed me that he would be down at noon. He asked me to call up Gardener Brothers in the meantime and instruct them to have his letter of credit here, without fail, by twelve. I did so. Then I looked in the library and told Mr. Arrowsmith what I had learned. As I held the door open Edward Galton passed me going out. Mr. Arrowsmith and I chatted for a moment, and he finally decided to attend to some other matter meanwhile and left the office, saying he would be back in time to catch Mr. Holland.

"'He had hardly left when he returned for his umbrella which he had forgotten. He said it looked like snow. A minute later he went out again and I did not see him until after my discovery. Meanwhile Edward Galton had come in again in company with two other students, Frank Hippe and John Tumulty. They were reading when, at ten minutes to twelve, Mr. Holland entered. The letter of credit had not come and he was very angry. I pointed out the fact that he had said noon, and that there were still ten minutes to spare. In spite of that he got Gardener Brothers on the wire and spoke very sharply. I gathered that he was told it was "on the way."'"

The reader paused, and Wills asked with a smile if that was supposed to constitute a motive for murder.

"Sharp words over the telephone," he explained when Dallas looked perplexed. "If so none of us would be safe."

The junior member, however, lacking a sense of humour, solemnly continued his reading.

"'Mr. Calvert, of Gardener Brothers, arrived with the letter of credit at 12.5. I was watching the clock. He came to my desk with it, and I asked him to hand it, himself, to Mr. Holland. He passed through the library door and five minutes later came out again and left the office. Shortly after that—not over five minutes at the most—I, myself, went to Mr. Holland's office. A question had occurred to me that required an answer from him before he sailed, and I thought best to get it at once, as otherwise I might forget it. The door to his office was closed. I knocked, fancied I heard him answer, and went in. To my astonishment his body was sagging to the right over the arm of his revolving chair, his head drooping forward at an angle, and the fingers of his right hand resting on the floor. His eyes were closed, or half closed, and I thought he had fainted.

"'I spoke to him, but he did not respond. I said sharply: "Mr. Holland!" The words were without effect. I lifted him up and straightened him in his chair. It was evident to me then that he was totally unconscious, perhaps moribund. His flesh, I observed,

was warm, and I could not believe him dead. I ran in haste to the front office, crying, as I did so: "Mr. Holland's unconscious! He must have a doctor at once." In all my experience I had never before been called upon to get a physician in that part of the city, and I was at a loss what to do. Kate Gillender, our telephone operator, came to the rescue. She put in an emergency call for an ambulance.

"'Returning to Mr. Holland's office, I found the three students there, and the whole outer-office force, I think, followed me. Frank Hippe said to me: "He's dead." He had unbuttoned his waistcoat and put his ear to his chest, and there was no observable heartbeat. Together, he and Andrew Force, the mail clerk, and I carried the body from the chair to the leather couch on the other side of the room. In spite of Hippe's assertion we did everything we could think of to restore consciousness, but, of course, without any effect. While we were working, Mr. Arrowsmith returned. He was greatly shocked and seemed very much moved. It was twenty minutes before the ambulance surgeon arrived. He made a cursory examination of the body, as it lay on the couch, and pronounced it a case of death from apoplexy. Mr. Arrowsmith told me he would call up Mr. Robert Holland and have him break the news to Mrs. Holland. And he did so. At the same time, on our second wire, the ambulance surgeon reported the case to the coroner.

"'The coroner's physician, Dr. Winters, reached the office at about one-thirty. I was present when he examined the body. It was a much more thorough examination than that of Dr. Michelson, the ambulance surgeon. He discovered a small puncture in the neck just at the base of the skull, made, evidently, by a sharp skewer-like piece of steel. There had been very little bleeding. The hair there was slightly matted and a small blood-stain was on the collar. Subsequently, he made a search of the private office and found, under Mr. Holland's desk, an old-fashioned wire bill or note-file, consisting of a sharp, upright of sharpened steel, set in a square iron base. The upright was blood-stained. He questioned me closely and I gave him all the facts embodied in this affidavit. It was not until after three o'clock that I learned of the arrest of Mr. Lee Calvert.'"

Mr. Dallas lowered the sheaf of typed sheets and looked at Owen Wills, who was making a pencilled note on the back of an envelope.

"Shall I read the others?" he asked.

"Is that the end of Manning's?" Wills enquired in turn.

"It is," the junior member answered, nodding.

"In the others is there any identification of the old-fashioned file?"

"No. No one in this office had ever seen it before."

"I understand. Thank you. The others merely confirm Manning?"

"Just that. I'll read them if you like."

"Oh, no. I shan't trouble you. You're very good. But I should like to see Mr. Holland's office, if I may."

"You certainly may."

Mr. Dallas returned the affidavits to his drawer, and, rising, held open his door and motioned to Wills to precede him.

At the next door—it bore upon its ground-glass panel the lettering: "Mr. Delray"—the visitor paused.

"This room is still locked, I assume?"

"Still locked."

Wills saw the key protruding from its escutcheon.

The Hammond office was also locked and Mr. Dallas, stepping to the baize-covered door, pushed it ajar and called:

"Mr. Manning! If you please."

The young man who appeared Wills scrutinized closely. He had noticed him in the outer office, on entering, but he now held an augmented interest. He was probably about twenty-six years of age, of medium height, with brown hair inclined to curl, and clean-shaven. His eyes, Wills noted, were hazel, and they struck him as shrewd,

as did also his close-lipped mouth. But he would hardly consider him dangerous. His forte, very evidently, was detail.

At Mr. Dallas's request Manning took from a pocket a key and opened the door to the scene of the tragedy. The office was half again as large as Mr. Dallas's. The flat-top desk of polished mahogany stood slant-wise on the right. The chair behind it faced the entrance diagonally. Its back was close to the door connecting with Mr. Delray's room.

Wills walked over and turned the knob of this door.

"It is locked," Mr. Dallas volunteered. "Has been locked since midsummer."

"And the key?"

"Manning has it."

As Wills was about to go, he said:

"What is your personal theory of the affair? Or haven't you any?"

The junior member hesitated.

"To me, of course," he answered presently, "it seems too terrible to be true. Yet the conclusion is obvious. Only one man could have done it. The man who was last in this room with him. Ah, there is, I recall now, in the statement of each of the three young men who sat in the library a vital point which you probably do not know. Until your client entered this room the door was open. He closed it when he entered and he closed it after him when he left."

"In the absence of motive," returned Wills, "that has little weight. He probably expected to be railed at, and, possibly, to have some 'sharp words' hurled after him."

"But there's a most impelling motive," Mr. Dallas rejoined. "If he's been frank with you, you must know it. He was carrying on an *affaire* with his victim's wife. Mr. Holland had discovered it. It was to separate them that he was about to take Mrs. Holland abroad.

Owen Wills flushed angrily.

"That," he said sharply, "is an infernal fabrication. And we will prove it."

Mr. Dallas smiled.

"And we will prove that Calvert went red-handed from here to keep an assignation with her."

CHAPTER VI

Despite the ministrations of the efficient Marie, Bianca Holland had slept but lightly; and so sleeping had been harassed by disturbing dreams from which, repeatedly, she started starkly awake. In all of them, Elliot, her husband, vigorously alive, was at grips with Lee Calvert. Usually he was choking him. In one—the most terrifying—he had slain him, and, wringing her hands in an insufferable frenzy of woe, she knelt beside his mangled and distorted cadaver, beseeching him to speak.

Daylight found her on the verge of nervous collapse. And Marie, taking matters in her own hands, because she feared a refusal should she ask permission, telephoned indirectly for Dr. Vanderslice. That is to say she called up Bianca's most intimate friend, Mrs. "Stanny" Rhysdael, and besought her to halve the responsibility. Which she promptly did. But at the same time, her tone one of condolent anxiety, she added: "I'm coming straight down to see her."

A woman without a confidante is an anomaly. Women's sorrows are lightened and their joys are heightened, it seems, by sharing. No matter how inclined to discretion, there is almost invariably one of their own sex in whose sympathetic keeping they entrust their secrets. And, while Calvert would have lost a limb rather than hint his romance to his closest friend, Bianca Holland had, from the very first, discussed every phase of it with Sarah Rhysdael.

It was not yet nine o'clock—an unconscionable hour for any smart woman to be abroad—when Sarah, without so much as tapping, burst into Bianca's chamber and, with a little cry of greeting, flew to her bedside and precipitately flung herself upon her.

"Oh, you poor, poor dear!" she mur-

mured, burying her face between the other's neck and shoulder, and inhaling the fragrance of Bianca's favourite French *sachet*.

Then, for a space, both wept. Sarah controllably, but Bianca in a series of hysterical spasms which her will was powerless to command.

Marie, standing in the bathroom door, regarded the scene with approval. It was the first time her mistress had cried, and she believed with Ovid that "grief is satisfied and carried off by tears."

"To think, dear," Sarah managed to say at length, sitting on the edge of the bed and dabbing at her moist lashes and cheeks, "that this awful thing should come to you!"

She was half a head shorter than Bianca, and fair. But for the unceasing war she waged against over-plumpness she would have been chubby. As it was, she was most daintily moulded.

Bianca, still sobbing, but more restrainedly, was without words. But the more volatile Sarah continued:

"Yesterday was terrible enough, but —this morning's papers! I wonder you are alive."

To the wretched woman propped there against the pillows, however, this meant nothing. She didn't care what the papers might say; what additional details they might give. Even if they should have got Robert Holland's story of his discovery it was all one to her. For she knew now the solitary secret of her misery. She had found it in her dreams. Elliot Holland dead was more powerful than Elliot Holland alive to keep Lee Calvert from her. There had never been a time in all their acquaintance when she needed him as she did now. And there had never been a time when he was so securely held from her.

She knew nothing of the actual conditions, of how by the machinery of the law he was pinioned. She still saw him a free man in every sense but one. She saw him at liberty to go and come as he pleased, everywhere save to her, from whom alone Convention barred him. For the sake of her good name, lest the world should see in his coming the casting of shadows behind, he must deprive both her and himself of the consoling sweetness of communion.

But Sarah Rhysdael had no inkling of the truth. Naturally enough, she had gathered from Marie's concern that her friend had gone nervously to pieces, not over her husband's death, but over this gruesome charge against and imprisonment of the man she loved. Nothing else, she felt, could account for it. Nothing else could warrant it.

Sarah came not to fortify, not to brace, not even to comfort. She came dolorously to sympathize. To mingle her tears with the tears of the sufferer and to follow her, sacrificially, as she traversed her Via Crucis.

"Poor Lee," she went on. "It's simply awful for him, too. No one can believe that he did it. And yet there's no one else that could. But that's the newspapers, you know. Stanny says that they'll never convict him. I do hope that——"

It was at this point that Bianca, springing up wide-eyed, gripped her wrist.

"What are you saying?" she cried in sudden agitation, aroused by the disturbing pregnancy of a phrase. "What are you saying?"

Sarah was startled. She was so taken by surprise, indeed, that just for a moment she could not recollect what she had been saying. Certainly nothing disloyal, though. She knew that.

"My dear!" she gasped, parrying, feinting.

"'Never convict him!'" Bianca repeated. "What do you mean?"

"That is what Stanny says," her friend qualified. "You don't—you can't believe that they will."

"Convict whom? Convict of what?"

Sarah paled with fright. Even now she did not divine the truth. It did not yet occur to her that Bianca knew less than she. There was, she thought, but one explanation: the horror had affected her friend's reason. She was not herself, poor thing. She turned about, her gaze seeking Marie. But

the Frenchwoman was gone. Her impulse was to run. She had never been alone with a demented person before. She did not know how to treat one. Bianca's grip on her wrist, however, was tightening. She tried to release her arm.

"Just a minute, dear," she pleaded. But the pressure of the circling fingers waxed stronger.

"Convict whom? Convict of what? Tell me!" Bianca repeated insistently.

"Try to think; try to remember, Bee!" Sarah rattled nervously. She recalled having heard that insane persons must be humoured.

"But no one has done anything."

"Someone has. You know that. Poor Elliot didn't kill himself."

"He wasn't killed. Who says he was killed?"

"The newspapers; everyone. But they've arrested the wrong man. We all know that. Lee couldn't have done it."

It was in this wise that the news came to the wretched Bianca, and she dropped under it as if an axe had crushed through her skull. Her hold on Sarah's wrist relaxed suddenly and she fell back among her pillows, ghastly white and inert.

At the same moment a tap sounded on the door, which Sarah was too frightened to hear. She was still sitting, half-paralyzed with alarm, on the bed's edge when a hand was laid on her shoulder and she started with a violent tremor.

A big, broad-shouldered man, grey-haired and with a scant grey beard trimmed to a point, was standing behind her.

Dr. Vanderslice had arrived in the nick of time.

CHAPTER VII

Owen Wills had gone straight from the Holland, Delray and Dallas offices to the Tombs and his client. Indignantly as he had resented and repudiated the Dallas declaration of motive as an "infernal fabrication," he was nevertheless greatly disturbed by it. And he was, moreover, infuriated that Lee Calvert should have concealed, if true, so vital an element. But was it true? It was inconceivable that Dallas could make such an assertion without pretty convincing evidence; and yet it was barely in reason that, considering the closeness of their intimacy, Calvert had been able to suppress so completely an attachment of this kind.

Until client and counsel were face to face, therefore, and the question had been put and answered, there was room for doubt. With the truth established, Will's exasperation rose to a high pitch. He was a temperamental young man, abundantly talented, who took his profession with great seriousness, and his own cleverness made him intolerant of the least evidence of stupidity in those he believed in.

"You're an ass," he stormed, his cheeks flushed to the temples and his eyes blazing. "Chivalry be damned. This was no time for chivalry of that sort. A man accused of crime should be as candid with his attorney as he is with his other self. And I refuse to act for a man who isn't. Holland's firm will throw all the weight of its combined forces—and that includes inside knowledge—in with the office of the district attorney. It will practically prepare his case for him. It's got this, and God only knows what else it's got. Whereas you, you poor simpleton, have put me at a disadvantage from the start. And I won't accept the handicap. How do I know what else you may have up your sleeve? We're beaten before the flag falls; left at the post. So I stop right here, because I decline to come in a bad last. Retain somebody else. I wash my hands of you."

Calvert, a little ashamed, struggled to force a smile.

"Oh, come, old chap!" he urged. "You're making a mountain out of a mole-hill. Suppose I had told you yesterday. What difference could it have made?"

Owen Wills did not deign to answer. He was picking up his hat. Then he moved towards the door. But on the threshold he halted and turned.

"Send for Lilligore," he advised. "He's a better lawyer than I dare ever hope to be. If any fellow can pull you through he can."

And he was gone.

It was Marvin Lilligore who represented Calvert at the Coroner's inquest when he was held for the Grand Jury. And it was Marvin Lilligore who, as attorney of record, applied for a transcript of the Grand Jury minutes after Calvert was indicted. For, impossible as such an eventuality had seemed to him, knowing his own innocence, the prosecution had experienced little difficulty in establishing a *prima facie* case.

The newspapers, meanwhile, had made all the capital possible out of Owen Wills's withdrawal, aided and abetted in this by the Holland office. Wills, they pointed out, was the accused man's most intimate friend—for years they had been closer than brothers—and Calvert had retained him immediately following his arrest. For twenty-four hours Wills had worked assiduously, and then, for some reason which could only be surmised, seeing that neither he nor the prisoner nor the prisoner's present counsel would throw any light on the matter, he had precipitately withdrawn.

The situation, anomalous as it appeared at first glance, was not so difficult of solution as some seemed to imagine. (So one of the "yellows" put it editorially.) There were many precedents for Mr. Wills's course. Indeed, it was not the first time that he himself had so acted. In the Majendie case, it might be remembered, he had done precisely the same thing. And it was explained at that time to be due to a disagreement with his client as to the policy of defence. Mr. Wills was an able jurist and jealous of his reputation—And so on, and so on, with the effect of leaving the distinct impression that so precarious was Calvert's position that Wills, who knew him best, could see hope of acquittal in but one direction.

In spite of this, however, and the whole combined campaign to try the case in the press, there was no word of denial or even of protest from either the Wills or the Lilligore office.

Early in November Bianca, masquerading under her maiden name and accompanied by Marie, had gone to Atlantic City. Dr. Vanderslice had so advised. And there, with Marvin Lilligore as intermediary, a daily exchange of letters with Lee Calvert had been established.

Than this she could have had no better medicine. Under its stimulus her nerves strengthened and, by degrees, her lost poise was re-established. For weeks—ever since that morning when Sarah Rhysdael had so ill-advisedly hurled at her the crushing fact of murder and arrest—doubt and apprehension had been her hourly companions. Her power to reason had been woefully crippled. Three sentences of Lee Calvert's had echoed and re-echoed with condemning emphasis:

"My conscience isn't so sensitive."

"I nearly had the willies waiting."

"If hating would kill Elliot Holland he'd be dead this minute."

And with each repetition her torture had increased.

Calvert's first letter, however, did much to exorcise these dread phantoms. Her vision slowly cleared. Dimly she began to see. And with each succeeding communication her sense of proportion grew, until she marvelled over her recent blindness. Lee wrote her of Owen Wills's defection and of his retention of Marvin Lilligore. Of the latter he said: "I have every confidence in him. He's a bigger man than Owen, and when he promises me acquittal, as he does every time I see him, I know that he'll accomplish it."

Bianca furiously resented Owen's course. She knew him and had liked him. But with reservations. He was capricious, inconsistent, impulsive; and she could never quite reconcile Lee's unqualified admiration for him. Nev-

ertheless, she felt that nothing could justify his desertion of his friend in such an extremity. It was indefensible —egregiously so.

One morning—it was just after the indictment—while in a wheel-chair on the boardwalk, with Marie beside her, Owen Wills, emerging from the throng like a pixy from leafage, stood at her elbow lifting his hat, a pleased, congratulatory smile on his lips.

If she could have escaped him she would. But, in taking her thus unawares, he had made escape save at the expense of crass crudeness impossible.

"I heard you'd been ill," he said. "I can see no signs of it."

"I hear you've been horrid," Bianca gave him back. "Yet you don't appear ashamed."

"There's a reason," was his rejoinder.

"Naturally. Satisfactory to yourself, I suppose, though I can hardly conceive even that."

"I think it might even satisfy you, if I were at liberty to share it."

"You're much too credulous."

He shrugged slightly and tossed his sleek dark head. "Let the future answer. I can wait."

"You expect to be justified then."

"And exonerated," he added, nodding. "By the way, may I call? I've something to ask you. Where are you stopping?"

"I'm not sure that I care to receive you. I can't condone disloyalty."

"I don't ask you to. I shan't. I have something else to ask that is much more important. That is why I am down here."

"Why not ask it now, then? It will save you time."

"It might be overheard. More than that, you may have to put on your thinking cap to answer."

"Is it——?" she began. But he interrupted her:

"Of course it is."

"But you don't know what I was going to say."

"Pardon me. I know very well. Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. You think only of one thing these days. I know that."

She gave him then the name of her hotel. "Shall we say five, this afternoon?" she added.

"You are very good," he answered, and putting on his hat was submerged in the crowd once more.

Over the tea-table in the parlour of Bianca's suite, that afternoon, with a dark steel-grey sea spreading away before them to where at the misty horizon it seemed to melt and rise in vapour, mixing with the pale November sky, Owen Wills produced a little red-leather memorandum book and read to her, one after another, five pencilled names.

"Do they mean anything to you?" he asked, as he finished. And Bianca answered:

"To the best of my recollection I've never heard but two of them before."

"And they are?"

"Frederick Manning and Stephen Arrowsmith."

"Try to recollect. Didn't your husband ever mention Edward Galton?"

"He might have. Who is he?"

"A young man who read law in his office."

"He wouldn't have been likely to. I've seen young men reading there. But they were never presented to me, any of them."

"Not Frank Hippe either? Nor John Tumulty?"

Bianca shook her head.

"Did he ever say anything of Manning?"

"He mentioned him at times. Yes."

"Did he seem to like him? Or did he complain of him?"

"I don't recall that he ever complained. He wouldn't to me, you know. Or praised, either."

"You know Arrowsmith, I suppose?"

"Very slightly. He married a sister of Elliot's. But she died before we were married. I think Elliot was trustee of some property she left, and of which Mr. Arrowsmith drew the income."

"They were on friendly terms then?"

"I think so. I never heard otherwise."

Wills returned the red-leather book to his waistcoat pocket.

"But if you're no longer Lee's counsel, why this effort at investigation?" Bianca asked, perplexed.

"Because I'm interested," was his answer. "I'm still his friend, you know. He didn't commit the crime. We both know that. Yet someone did. If we can discover who, then Lee will go free. Sometimes that's the shortest cut. Wouldn't you like to help me find him?"

"I'd do anything possible," she consented, a quickened interest in her expression. More, indeed, than in her words. "But it seems such a hopeless task. No one in the office would have done it. I'm sure they wouldn't. Not any more than Lee."

"I'm not so sure. Still, you may be right. But if it was anyone other than a person in the list of five I read to you, then we have a certainty to begin on. And that is that Manning has lied. And——" He paused suddenly. "But that's absurd. Manning is corroborated by the other four—by every one of them. Barely five minutes elapsed between Lee's leaving and Manning's discovery. Someone in the office must have done it. Arrowsmith didn't come in until later, they say. That leaves only four to choose from: Manning and the three law students. And if one of the students did it, then the other two, who were in the library, are accessories."

"And what can I do even in that case?"

Owen Wills bent nearer to her.

"Possibly nothing. But possibly, still, a great deal. You can go carefully through your husband's correspondence. I mean his private letters. There's a mass of them, I suppose. It won't be a light task. But you may unearth bad blood. You may discover an animus. You may be the means of saving Lee Calvert from the electric chair. For, I may tell you, now, that his case, otherwise, is a weak one."

CHAPTER VIII

Society from the first had refused to take the charge against Calvert seriously. Had he been like any one of two score or more men whose names were on its tongue-tip it would have said "not at all unlikely." But Lee Calvert! Never! He was not that sort. He was too level-headed, too abstemious, and not in the least emotional. Why, this affair of his with Bianca Holland was a point in his favour.

Not for a very long time had society had such a surprising morsel as that. Even the most unconscionable gossipmongers had never had an inkling. And, now that it was out, only a small minority dared say that it had gone beyond the restrained stage. Men of such circumspection were not the men who, with malice prepense, would walk boldly into the office of an acquaintance and with gloved-hand hammer a crude needle-like thing of steel between his skull and vertebræ. And with a dozen or more office employes within a few yards of the scene! The whole edifice it seemed must fall of its own weight. The district attorney must be a fool, or else gone suddenly mad.

Society, however, is but a small sector of the circle which is called the body politic. And the body politic as a whole, being less well informed, was inclined generally to take the opposite view. It was not the district attorney who was the fool or madman; it was the prisoner. How many cases had there been of almost exact similarity? Cases proven, too, beyond all question in which the defendant's counsel pleaded "brain-storm" because there was nothing else to plead? That was how the great public, which fed the newspapers as well as being fed by them, regarded the case. And it was from this great public and not that small sector that, when in February the case came to trial, the jury was drawn.

A rumour had got into print and so gone abroad that the widow of the slain man—the sweetheart of the accused—was to be called as a State's witness; and, because of this more than anything else, the courtroom became a magnet for all classes from the élite to the proletariat. It drew them from the very beginning. That they might miss nothing connected with her and the case in which she was involved they attended on the opening day in throngs, though all but the most inexperienced knew that she would not be present. Interestedly they sat through the long monotony of choosing the "good men and true" who were to pass judgment on the admitted evidence.

To one auditor in particular this selection of the jury was especially interesting. He occupied a seat at the right end of the second row, directly under the jury box, a dark, dapper, nervously-energetic-appearing young gentleman with hair as smoothly black and shining as patent-leather and a small black moustache like a rectangle of court-plaster between his straight, sensitive nose and his too red lips. He wore an inconspicuous but well-cut suit of heavy blue serge, quite dark, and sat with crossed legs on which rested his overcoat and soft hat. It was Owen Wills.

That which particularly interested him was the battle of the opposing attorneys for and against two types of jurors. The State was evidently anxious to pick from the panel at least a majority of men who were elderly, married, middle- or lower-class, and religiously-inclined to the verge of narrowness. Whereas Marvin Lilligore, in the interest of his client, was both desirous and determined to pack the box if possible with bachelors of means, preferably young, and, if not socially eminent, at least worldly wise. On very few of those questioned was it possible for their minds to meet, with the inevitable consequence that their permitted quota of peremptory challenges was approaching exhaustion before the requisite twelve were half chosen.

For two days the conflict raged with small advantage to either. On the third day, however, that which might have been foreseen from the first, happened. For from the first the type preferred by the defence had been in the minority. The panel had dwindled, neither side had a peremptory challenge left, and the court, impatient of the prolonged bickering, became suddenly arbitrary, and ruled out one challenge "to the favour" after another as rapidly as they were voiced. So that in the end the jury sworn was, presumably the District Attorney's, other things being equal, in the proportion of seven to five.

In the meantime, owing to crush of the curious, it had become necessary to limit the attendance to those fortunate enough to secure cards of admission. And by the third day, many of the "regulars" who came early had their "regular" seats.

Owen Wills, having chosen his in the beginning, retained it, and so did the middle-aged man who had been seated toward that end of the second row when Wills pushed past him to take the place beyond directly under the jury box.

He was a lean, wiry, sinewy creature of perhaps forty-five or six; clean-shaven and partially bald. His hair, including that of his heavy eyebrows, was a light tawny brown, and his eyes a dim, watery blue-grey, the whites of which, like his skin, tinged with the yellow of old parchment. His clothes —they included a coat and trousers of brown worsted, with a soiled pin-stripe in it, and a waistcoat of thick-ribbed corduroy of a darker brown—were an index of the man. They indicated a sport, so to speak, rather gone to seed. His shoes were much worn—they were tan oxfords, evidently, though masked by shabby, soiled, dun-coloured spats. And the tan overcoat, which he had thrown over the back of the bench before sitting down, was threadbare at the edges. His hat was a brown Derby of about the same colour as his hair.

Wills, in spite of his interest in the

jury-selection, now and then glanced observantly at him without seeming to do so. And he took in all and more than is here recorded. Indeed, on that first day, he had noticed in crowding past him, that he exhaled an unmistakable smell of alcohol; and after that the only change was in variation of degree.

That which drew Wills's attention most fixedly upon his neighbour was an inarticulate something that escaped him on the first day when Calvert, under guard, took his place in the dock. It was more in the nature of a gasp—a suppressed gasp—Wills thought, than anything else. But whether it indicated surprise or pity or dismay it was difficult for him to determine. Out of the corner of his eye he tried to gather something more from the man's expression, without any positive success. He ascertained only that his gaze continued fixed upon the prisoner with an unfaltering intensity. A more casual observer than Wills would probably have divined that he was endeavouring to decide, in advance of the evidence, whether Calvert was innocent or guilty. But the young lawyer had a theory which militated against such a conclusion. And, as in partial justification of this, it was but a minute or so later that the gazer turned to him with:

"Good-looking chap, isn't he? His portraits in the papers haven't done him justice. Don't wonder he made a hit with Holland's wife."

For answer Wills nodded pleasantly, without opening his lips. It was, nevertheless, the beginning of an acquaintance which was to ripen as the trial progressed.

So thoroughly had the case been featured in the newsprints that the District Attorney's outline of it to the jury presented nothing that was not already common property. And those who hung on his words, hoping and expecting for some sensational revelation had small reward. As ultimately developed, however, there were generalities in the arraignment which were of such latitude as to include certain effective surprises, cleverly reserved for the witness stand, undiscounted by so much as a suggestion in advance.

They came in the second stage of the State presentation, when, having proved the *corpus delicti*, it became incumbent to establish a strongly impelling motive, seeing that there was no single actual witness to the commission of the crime.

That Bianca Holland would be called for this purpose had been, as already stated, rather widely rumoured. And, in connection with the rumour, it was believed by the many who had followed the matter from the first that her testimony would be chiefly as to the luncheon at Giro's on the day of the murder, and, generally, concerning her relations with the accused. Certainly, even the most sensationally imaginative could hardly have foreseen what was prepared for them, including not merely the bolt from the blue furnished by Bianca herself, with lowered eyes and in a voice so faint as to be nearly inaudible, but the corroboration from a member of her own household as well as from her deceased husband's brother.

There had been something more than a distinctly audible stir in the courtroom when her name was called. There had been a susurration—starting faintly like a faint whisper of the wind in a forest—and rising to a murmur as of rushing waters. Old Judge McCready his abundant white hair seeming to bristle and his clear blue eyes snapping, rapped thunderously for order. And the voices were stilled.

The silence following was one of a strained expectancy.

Then, suddenly, there was a slight recurrence. Necks were craned. At the back of the room a man stood up. A dozen followed his example. In an instant more than half the assemblage was on its feet.

A door to the right, behind the jury box, had opened and a black, close-fitting toque, draped with a widow's veil, had become visible.

Again the Court's gavel echoed re-

soundingly and a clerk was crying: "Take your seats or the courtroom will be cleared!"

As Bianca sank into the capacious armchair on the elevation of the witness stand one could have heard a pin drop. With a black-gloved hand she lifted her veil from her face, sweeping it back over her shoulder. Her face was marble white in its sable setting and calm as a nun's. Owen Wills noted that she had dropped her gaze to her hands, which she folded in her lap.

The District Attorney, stepping close, waited while she was sworn. This formality ended, he put to her the no less formal questions as to her name, her residence, and her relationship to the victim of the crime it was his duty to probe.

"Give me the date, please, of your marriage."

Bianca gave it.

"You were married four years then, lacking about a month, when you were widowed?"

"Yes."

Her examiner paused, thoughtfully, for several seconds, his eyes turned to a window across the courtroom, through which a grey sky was visible. Then, turning, he said abruptly:

"You know the prisoner at the bar?"

"I do," Bianca answered, her poise undisturbed.

"How long have you known him?"

"Two years."

"How well have you known him?"

In spite of her a faint colour crept into the whiteness of her face.

"Very well. He is the best friend I have."

"Your husband was fond of him, too?"

"My husband scarcely knew him."

The District Attorney smiled.

"You mean by that, I assume, that Mr. Holland was not fond of him. 'To know him is to love him.' But not knowing him your husband couldn't love him. Was he indifferent to him?"

Marvin Lilligore objected. The District Attorney was drawing conclusions unwarranted by the witness's answers. He asked that his assumption be stricken out. And the Court so ruled.

The District Attorney bowed. Then he asked again:

"Was your husband indifferent to him?"

"My husband disliked him," Bianca answered.

"Why?"

"He thought that Mr. Calvert was supplanting him in my affections. That was how he put it."

"In plain English, he was jealous. Isn't that so?"

"Yes."

"You were unhappy with your husband?"

"Yes."

"How long had you been unhappy with him?"

Bianca's eyes dropped to her gloved hands again. "From the day I married him," she answered, so low that the jury couldn't hear it and the court stenographer was asked to read it from his notes.

"But you were about to go abroad with him?"

"Yes."

"The prisoner knew that?"

"Yes."

"What did he say about it?"

"I don't remember his words."

"Try."

"He wished me to get out of going if possible. Either that or consent to his following us."

"When did he ask that?"

"I don't remember."

"Was it more than once?"

"It was several times. Whenever we met."

"Wasn't the last time on the afternoon prior to the murder?"

For the first time since taking the witness stand Bianca's control of her vision eluded her. Her regard slipped like a bird between the wires of its cage and darted to a meeting that she had willed to deny it. It met that of the man she loved and hovered there, caressing and caressed.

Calvert, as perfectly composed as in

his own office, and the pink of smartness, flashed to her approval and encouragement. It was as though he said: "Be frank. The truth can harm neither of us."

And Bianca, her regard still hovering, said "Yes," in answer to the District Attorney's question.

"But you saw each other after that?"

"Yes."

"When and where?"

"The following day between one and two, at Giro's restaurant."

"He didn't plead with you then to give up your trip?"

"No."

"He seemed more resigned. Was that it?"

"He didn't seem resigned."

"How did he seem? Nervous?"

"He appeared distressed—more distressed than ever—at the prospect of my going."

"But he never once asked you not to?"

"No."

"Didn't that strike you as peculiar?"

"No. We settled that definitely the day before."

"You settled it definitely? He knew the day before that there was no hope of your retracting?"

"Yes."

"You'd never given him any hope on previous occasions, had you?"

"No."

"But that didn't stop him, did it?"

"No."

The District Attorney took a step nearer to the witness.

"Did he speak to you at luncheon about his call on your husband that morning?"

"Yes."

"What did he say about it?"

"He merely told me that he had gone there to deliver a letter of credit."

"Didn't he say how your husband received him? Was he cold? Was he polite? Was there a quarrel?"

"I remember him saying that Mr. Holland seemed vexed."

"What made him say that? Did he tell you how he exhibited his vexation?"

"He spoke of him flushing, I think. Of his face being red."

"That suggested apoplexy, of course."

"Naturally."

"Did he say anything about him being likely to die of apoplexy?"

"He knew that Mr. Holland's physician had cautioned him in that respect."

"You're sure of that?"

"Quite sure. I told him myself."

"And you remember, of course, that when your husband's body was first discovered it was supposed he had died of an apoplectic seizure?"

"Yes."

"Well, now, Mrs. Holland, I want you to tell me candidly if you do not now regard it as a peculiar coincidence that your friend, coming to you direct from your husband's office, where in fact your husband was lying dead, supposedly of apoplexy, at that moment, and had been so lying before this friend could have left the office building, should have spoken of his flushing, of his being vexed, of his face being red, and, for the first time since learning of your proposed going abroad, *not* have put in a final plea for you to forego that European visit?"

Marvin Lilligore was on his feet before the question was concluded.

"Don't answer, Mrs. Holland," he cautioned, and addressing the Court: "I object, your honour. How the witness may or may not regard the testimony is not admissible as evidence."

The objection was sustained, just as the District Attorney knew it would be. Yet he had, notwithstanding, managed by his question to get his desired intimation before the jury. Later, in cross-examination, Marvin Lilligore might strive to obliterate its effect; but the reasoning was too sound, he believed, not to weigh against the accused.

CHAPTER IX

IT is the practice of many of the more successful legal practitioners, in direct examination as well as in cross-exami-

nation, to spring without warning from one topic or feature of their case to another of distinctly contrasting interest. The District Attorney had passed very lightly over the matter of Bianca Holland's relations with Lee Calvert. He had apparently been satisfied with her responses to the effect that she had known him very well for two years, and she had experienced no little relief at being let off so easily. But almost on top of his failure to get upon the record an opinion from her as to the significance his point gathered from the incident at Giro's he took her at one bound back to that question of relations.

With a pretence of kindly consideration he prefaced his query with a statement as to her privilege. If to answer would tend to degrade or incriminate her she was at liberty to refuse on that ground. And then he shot his bolt:

"Were, or were not, your relations with the prisoner at the bar meretricious?"

Bianca seemed to quiver and then wilt under the impact. Her lids drooped, her hands gripped the arms of her chair. She had been sitting up, rather tense. She slipped back until she rested against the woven cane network behind her. Shame dyed her cheeks.

Her counsel indignantly voiced his objection. The District Attorney combated it, and the Court sustained him.

The question was repeated.

"They were not," Bianca murmured.

"Merely platonic?" A sneer accompanied the words.

The witness was silent. And this time Judge McCready came to her rescue.

"I think," he said, "that the witness has already made it clear that she regards the word 'meretricious' at one pole and the term 'platonic' at the other. She will admit, I believe, a happy mean."

The District Attorney bowed.

"I am grateful to your Honour," he said. "I shall be glad to accept the witness's definition of just what the relations were. But I may add that I purpose to prove there was more than a mere brotherly and sisterly affection existing."

He turned again to the witness.

"Do you admit that, Mrs. Holland?" he asked.

Bianca's "Yes" was just audible.

"The prisoner was in the habit of kissing you, embracing you?"

The audience strained to catch her answer.

"We were and are very much in love with each other."

Very clearly, with perfect enunciation and telling emphasis, in a voice of infinite refinement and melody, yet with an unmistakable pride—glorying, indeed, in the confession—she spoke; her eyes not on her interlocutor, but on Lee Calvert; on Lee Calvert's eyes, rather, which met them directly in mutual caress.

The spirit of romance, which has a place in the hearts of all men, rose to her. The courtroom palpitated with appreciation and threatened applause. A buzz, like the first ripple of wind stirring the leaves in a wood, was detected by the presiding genius on the bench, and once more his gavel beat a warning tattoo on the block at his right hand.

Owen Wills, watching the District Attorney—he was a large man of middle age and sandy complexion—saw his jaw set and two lines deepen between his eyebrows. His witness had cunningly circumvented him; had turned his purpose to her own profit and the profit of the man she loved and believed in. Still, her answer had not been wholly relevant; it implied assent, but it lacked explicit confession. Would the questioner demand a definite "yes" or "no"? Could he take that risk of antagonizing a jury now suddenly more than half disposed in her favour and so inclined to resent so much as a tinge of persecution? Wills was disposed to think he wouldn't. And Wills was right.

"That is all, Mrs. Holland," he said. "I thank you."

Her cross-examination by Marvin Lilligore served merely to make of her a heroine—a beautiful woman sinned against by an unfeeling and unsympathetic husband, yet rigidly holding herself indeed, if not in inclination, to the letter of her marital covenant.

Counsel for the defence, too, when his turn came, did much to riddle the testimony of the State's corroborating witnesses—the maid who admitted Calvert to the Holland home on the afternoon preceding the crime, and who had watched and listened through a keyhole to that scene in the library-boudoir; and Robert Holland, the dead lawyer's Vandyk-bearded brother.

He showed that the maid was in her master's pay, that to make good she had sometimes invented visits from Calvert, that she depended on her memory, rather than written notes, for her report of conversations. And he showed also that, aside from the finding of Mrs. Holland and the accused lunching at Giro's on the day of the crime, Robert Holland knew only what his brother had told him, and that that, almost entirely, was a repetition of information furnished by the fallible maid.

The District Attorney, however, had not released Bianca without a reservation. He had foreseen pretty nearly just what had happened, and in letting her go then, when there was the danger which Wills had divined, it was with the idea in view of recalling her later to rebut Lilligore's deductions. For, however meagre the effect of his early efforts, he had at least assured himself of the witness's scrupulous veracity.

If the maid of the keyhole had told more or less of fact, Mrs. Holland must and should give it the proper balance by contributing the exact truth. Moreover, in order to gain the most telling effect, he reserved this for his penultimate effort.

It was the general opinion up to this time that the State had signally failed in making out a case, and that should nothing more convincing be educed the defence would win hands down. No jury would send a reputable gentleman to the electric chair simply because he had been alone in an office with a man who was found dead five minutes later, and with no more impelling motive than his being in love with the man's wife and about to be separated from her.

Calvert had heard with a confirming fillip to his confidence the District Attorney announce that he would close his case with the recalling of one witness and the examination of one other. And it was with no lessening of his assurance that he heard the clerk name Bianca Holland as the former.

She smiled at him as she again took her place on the stand, her composure, as compared with that of the first day, visibly marked.

"Mrs. Holland," the examiner began while she was still settling herself in the chair, "I'm sorry to trouble you again, but there are some points in the testimony of the maid we had here which, as they appear to be in dispute, I wish you to set right for us. I want you to think back to the afternoon prior to the—the decease of your husband, and tell us in your own way as nearly as possible what was said and done during Calvert's call on you."

After a moment Bianca, in a quiet tone, briefly outlined in general terms that which was asked. She began by saying that there had been an understanding between them that he should not call at her home. But the occasion was unusual. He had apologized and she had overlooked it. As she had previously testified, he asked her to find some way out of going.

At that point she was interrupted. "Did he tell you he had been in purgatory?"

"I think he did use that expression."

"Did he say that the thought of your going was driving him insane?"

"Not that I remember."

"Try to remember."

"He said—I'm not sure just how he used it—but that separation, or the thought of separation, was maddening."

"I merely wished to get those points clear. Will you please go on?"

Bianca continued: "There is little more to tell. We had tea. I said that Elliot would be home soon, as we were dining out that evening. I promised to lunch with him the next day."

"You recall nothing else?"

"Nothing vital."

From the table by which he stood he took up some typewritten sheets, a transcript of the maid's testimony.

"Perhaps if I refresh your memory you will. Didn't you say—perhaps not in so many words, but at least give the impression—that you would never be entirely his until your husband was dead?"

"I said, until I was free."

"But you had your husband's death in mind. And your lover knew you had. Isn't that so?"

Bianca hesitated. She began to see now where he was leading her. "My husband had been warned of apoplexy. He was full-blooded, and——"

"Answer my question, please. Yes or no."

"I may have."

"Don't you know you had? Didn't you say that you were sure to be free before long?"

"I don't remember using those words."

"In other words, then. You both wanted the happiness that he stood in the way of. You had no grounds on which to divorce him and you would not give him grounds to divorce you. Death was the only way, wasn't it?"

"You are saying that, not I."

"I'm asking you. You must answer. And the answer is obvious. Was there any other possible way to freedom?"

She knew that she was trapped, and despairing said:

"No. Of course not. Still I——"

"Then death *was* the only way."

"Yes."

"What was it your caller said about his conscience?"

"I don't recall."

"Well, then, what was it you said about yours?"

"I think I said to keep my conscience clear I'd rather he and my husband shouldn't meet."

"Exactly. And what did the man who is now here on trial say in reply?"

"I'm not certain what he said."

"Didn't he say that if he could induce a fatal stroke of apoplexy in your lord and master it wouldn't bother his conscience any?"

"I'm sure he didn't say that."

"But that was the meaning of what he said, wasn't it?"

"He may have said that his conscience was less sensitive than mine."

"Words to that effect?"

"Yes."

"Can you interpret that in any way different from my interpretation?"

"I'm sure he didn't mean it as you put it."

"That is most charitable of you. The facts indicate that he meant even more than he said."

But on Marvin Lilligore's appeal this comment was stricken from the record. When the witness was turned over to him he declined to cross-examine; and the State asked that James Finnerty be called.

This final witness was, it promptly appeared, a detective connected with the District Attorney's office; a short, thick-set young Irishman with blue eyes and bristling chestnut hair.

When he had been sworn the District Attorney produced from a pocket a small paper-wrapped parcel, and, tearing off the wrapping, passed to the witness the object thus revealed. Not until it was in the detective's hand did it become visible to the seeking eyes of the packed courtroom. When it did a flutter of quickened interest swept the room from end to end. It was a small iron and steel paper-file, the counterpart apparently of the one employed in the killing of Elliot Holland.

"Will you kindly examine that?"

The witness turned it over a couple of times, regarding it from all sides.

"Have you seen it before?"

"I have."

"How do you know?"

"I identify a letter F that I scratched on it."

"When and where did you first see it?"

"In the banking house of Gardener Brothers, Wall and Nassau streets, on December 27th last."

"In what part of the banking house?"

"In the storeroom in the basement."

"Were there others like it?"

"Not exactly. There were several patterns. Some were of brass."

"Had you ever seen one precisely like it?"

"I had."

"Where?"

"In your office, sir."

"The one that is now here—this one?" And the District Attorney took up from the table the file found beneath the desk of the victim.

"Yes, sir."

"Your Honour," said the prosecutor, taking the file from the witness, "I offer this in evidence, and ask that it be marked Exhibit X."

The Court nodded.

"Cross-examine."

Mr. Lilligore compared the exhibits. They were as like as two pins. His face was serious. Here, at the last moment, was something really dangerous. Something it would be difficult to combat. Abruptly he turned to the witness.

"December 27th was a Sunday, was it not?"

"It was. Yes, sir."

"How did you get into Gardener Brothers' storeroom on that day?"

"The janitor let me in."

"Why didn't you go on a weekday?"

"I wanted a chance to look 'round without interruption."

"Wasn't it that you wished to keep your visit a secret from the firm?"

"No."

"You asked the janitor not to mention your having been there, didn't you?"

"I may have."

"Didn't you?"

"Well, yes. We weren't for giving our case away."

"I thought so. Did you give him money or—just a cigar?"

"I slipped him a couple of smokes."

"That's all."

Three days later the case went to the jury, following a forceful, logical argument for conviction on the part of the District Attorney, in which he emphasized particularly the sheer impossibility of the crime having been committed by other hands than those of the prisoner. And he backed up his contention with a clever and convincing linking together of the evidence bearing on the impelling force of passion for the victim's wife, and the admitted "madness," "purgatory," and "a conscience palsied by amorous desire, denied, unsatisfied."

The closing appeal of the defence was eloquent to a degree. Yet it had no more proven fundamental fact for its basis than a hitherto stainless character—and that qualified by an admitted fracture of the tenth commandment and a playing fast and loose with the seventh. The perilous injustice of relying on evidence of a purely circumstantial nature was dwelt upon at length. It was, indeed, Lilligore's sole reliance.

The charge of Judge McCready was a model of impartiality. He told the jury just what to consider and what to ignore, and he cautioned them against accepting as true circumstances unsupported by evidence sufficiently strong to appeal to their reason.

For twenty hours, with each tick of the clock portentous, the question hung balanced. Hope and Fear see-sawed in the hearts of Lee Calvert and Bianca Holland until it seemed to both of them that even the worst would be a relief. The suspense itself became unbearable torture. The rack and the thumbscrew appeared humane in comparison. And then, when torment could do no more, a whisper came. The judge had been summoned; the jury had arrived at a decision.

Bianca, in the judge's chambers, surrounded by friends, saw the slight figure with the rubicund face and white

hair and beard enter hurriedly and thrust his arms into the flowing sleeves of his black silk gown of office. Then her eyes closed, and she sat as in a coma, scarcely breathing.

Calvert, back in the dock once more, watched the twelve men with his fate in their keeping, file solemnly through the door from the jury room and take their places.

The usual formalities began and ended. He had risen at command and "looked upon the jury," he had been "looked upon" in turn; the usual questions had been put; and now—after æons, it seemed to him, the foreman's mouth had opened for that last answer.

"*Guilty of murder in the first degree.*"

CHAPTER X

WITHIN a week Judge McCready was in possession of sufficient facts, provided by Marvin Lilligore, to warrant him, he believed, in granting Calvert a new trial on the ground of freshly discovered evidence, not hitherto available. It developed then that the old judge was himself by no means satisfied with the justice of the verdict rendered. He had really been most friendly to the accused from the beginning, and was personally of the opinion that there was no warrant for conviction. So, when Lilligore offered to prove, if given the chance, that even more mysterious crimes—though less serious—had been committed in the Holland, Delray and Dallas offices since the murder, he took the view that such evidence would in all likelihood be all that was necessary to throw the balance to the side of acquittal.

There was no mention then of the suspicion attaching to Arrowsmith. Owen Wills, working in secret with Lilligore, had been more than half convinced from the first that this ne'er-do-well brother-in-law was the perpetrator of the crime. He had divined it on that occasion of his interview with Mr. Dallas, when the latter had so obligingly read to him the managing clerk's affidavit. And he had made notes of certain statements at the time: including that concerning the visitor's return for his umbrella and his absence until the office was in excitement over the discovery of the dead body.

But when the petition for a new trial was presented Wills still lacked a full assurance of the man's guilt. And for so much as a whisper of the pointing finger to get abroad might make hopeless the certainty toward which he was still energetically labouring.

He had, nevertheless, lost no time in conveying to Bianca Holland his high hopes. It was she, indeed, who had quickened his early suspicion and contributed a valuable addition to the evidence by her discovery, in that mass of her husband's private correspondence, of a threatening letter from Arrowsmith, written within a fortnight of the murder.

And for his friend Calvert's consoling he had sent him, through Lilligore, a promise to free him before Easter.

"Tell him," he had said, "that I'm the architect of his deliverance. I've built it up story by story. Now I'm going to put the roof on."

In spite of the efforts of the District Attorney's office toward delay, the new trial was squeezed into a rift in the calendar in mid-April. And much to the surprise of the Holland, Delray and Dallas office, about everyone employed there, from firm-member to office-boy, was subpœnæd by the defence. The prosecution relied almost wholly on its original evidence, supplemented by its deductions and the moving oratory of its exponent, coupled with his acknowledged gift for effective cross-examination. Indeed, in order that expedition should characterize the proceedings, it was mutually agreed by counsel that much of the testimony taken in the former action should be simply read into this from the record.

About the only exception on the part of the District Attorney was in his recalling of Bianca Holland. When she was previously on the stand—and she

was there twice, it will be remembered —he had let her go, once because he feared to pursue his point lest he antagonize the jury, and again because to question her on the original point would be to lose an effect he had secured only after considerable effort.

In this proceeding, however, he called her directly following the reading of the maid's testimony, and his first question had to do with that part of it which dealt with the embrace and the kiss.

"Do you wish to swear that the eyesight of the maid was at fault in this instance?" he asked.

"I do not," Bianca answered. "Those who are deeply in love are given to mutual caresses."

"You kissed passionately. That is the word in evidence. Also that it was a 'long kiss.' You do not wish to qualify those terms?"

"They are both comparative terms. How passionately or how long is hardly of consequence, is it?"

"I was asking you."

"I measured neither."

"The hour given is between five and five-thirty in the afternoon. Is that correct?"

"I believe so."

"And you parted at about six?"

"Yes."

"You kissed him good-bye?"

"I did."

"Even though you knew he had murder in his heart?"

"I knew nothing of the kind."

"Didn't you testify at the other trial that he had told you his conscience was not sensitive regarding the provocation of a fatal apoplectic seizure in your husband?"

"Did I?"

"You did. The record proves it."

"Then why ask me again?"

"Because I want to connect it. Because I want to show that, feeling as he did, your kisses were an added encouragement to the commission of a crime you had already discussed. And less than nineteen hours after that, immediately following a call from this lover of yours, your husband was found murdered, wasn't he?"

"I believe so."

Mr. Lilligore had no questions and the rather monotonous reading of the record continued.

It was not until this reading was finished that anything approaching a surprise rewarded either the auditors or those more nearly interested. That the defence was about to introduce testimony so favourable to the prisoner as possibly to reverse the previous verdict was, of course, well understood, and there had been more or less conjecture as to what this was. But no one, from the District Attorney himself to the blue-coated Cerberus at the door, was prepared for such testimony. Apparently it had no bearing whatever. It was absolutely extraneous. And before five questions had been put to Manning —Holland, Delray and Dallas's managing clerk—who was the first witness called, the prosecutor was on his feet objecting on the ground of irrelevancy and immateriality.

The Court, however, already advised as to the bearing, was lenient. And Manning, in answer to the Lilligore interrogations, rehearsed succinctly all that he knew concerning the mysterious disappearances from the law offices of a certain document and a certain volume of law reports. The occurrences mentioned by Wills to Arrowsmith on the afternoon of Calvert's conviction.

It seemed that barely a quarter of an hour had elapsed from the time of Manning putting the document in the safe at his side until, being desirous of looking at it again, it was not to be found. And he was most positive that no one had been near the safe in the meantime. Nor was the taking of the law book from Mr. Delray's office—the one formerly occupied by the late Mr. Holland—less perplexing. Mr. Delray had stepped into the library, leaving the book on his desk. In less than five minutes, returning, it was gone. A week later both the document and the book were returned by messenger. An effort had been made to trace

the sender, but it was unsuccessful. Mr. Delray himself furnished the latter facts, and they were corroborated by a dozen other witnesses, each of whom swore to ignorance of how the disappearance had been effected.

With the purpose, evidently, of associating these seemingly disconnected matters with the event of the murder, each witness was questioned as to his or her presence in the office on the day of the greater crime, and particularly as to the coming and going of Mr. Stephen Arrowsmith.

Manning adhered closely to his testimony as given in the former trial. He was sure that Arrowsmith had returned for his umbrella, had secured it, and had immediately gone out again. From that moment he was absent, the witness said, until after the discovery of the body. And the telephone operator and mail clerk supported him. Some of the others were not so sure. After this lapse of time it was hardly possible they should remember.

This introduction of the name of Arrowsmith had the effect of transmuting a negative interest into a positive one. The audience was quick to see in it the emergence of a hitherto unmentioned suspect, and when, a little later, the clerk of the court called three times the name:

"Leda Arrowsmith! Leda Arrowsmith! Leda Arrowsmith!" the entire room was on tiptoe.

There came presently through a side door—for both she and the man whose name she bore by courtesy, though summoned, had been kept in an anteroom until now—a tall, blonde, rather showily, yet poorly, dressed woman of some beauty in spite of lines of dissipation.

Having given her name and address, she was asked:

"Are you Stephen Arrowsmith's wife?"

"I am called that," she answered, and smiled shamelessly.

"You mean you've never been married to him."

"That's the idea. You get me."

"You've lived together how many years?"

"Five or six."

"You know his financial condition pretty well, then?"

"Just as well as he does."

"Money's been pretty tight of late, eh?"

"You've said it."

"You both need clothes, don't you?"

"You only have to look at us to see that."

"How long is it since Steve had an umbrella?"

"So long I don't remember. I know he hasn't had one since we took the room on Twenty-second Street, and we're on our second year there now."

"That's all."

The District Attorney asked two questions.

"Have you an umbrella?"

"No."

"Doesn't Arrowsmith borrow one now and then?"

"I never knew him to."

When Leda had been led back to the anteroom, John Dumphrey was called. A letter-carrier at the rear of the room rose and came forward.

"Does your route include the offices of Holland, Delray and Dallas?" was Marvin Lilligore's first question after the oath had been administered.

"It does. Yes, sir."

"Tell the jury, please, what happened there on the morning of February seventeenth last."

"I called to deliver the mail as usual. But as the mail clerk was not at his desk and there was a postage-due letter I took it to Mr. Manning. When he turned his back to get the six cents due I was standing by the open safe. There was a blue-backed paper there and I slipped it out and put it under a stack of letters I had in my hand."

"Had you orders to do that?"

"I had."

"From whom?"

"The Assistant Postmaster."

"That's all."

On cross-examination the witness said that he was under the impression

it was a bit of fun. He had been given explicit directions and had had to wait several days for just the right opportunity.

"If it would be any satisfaction for you to know it"—it was Lilligore who spoke, addressing his adversary—"I arranged it. Or, rather, my office did."

He turned to the clerk.

"Call Martin Cleary, please!"

Cleary was a young Irishman. "A window-cleaner," he said. He had been employed in February by the superintendent of the office building in which the Holland, Delray and Dallas offices were. On the morning of Valentine's Day he was cleaning the windows of those offices. He was in the middle private office. It was unoccupied at the time. It was nearly noon when he finished there. He opened the connecting door to the first private office. There had been a gentleman engaged there when he began, which was why he did the middle-room windows first. When he opened the door he saw that the gentleman was gone. There was a book on the desk by which he had been sitting. The witness picked it up and stuck it beneath his jumper. Then he heard the noon hour strike, so he went back to the middle office, closed the connecting door, took up his pail and brushes and other tools and went out through the library. He gave the book to the superintendent, who had ordered him to pick up anything handy that was likely to be missed. Like the letter-carrier, he had understood it was just for a practical joke.

The audience now was being greatly entertained. It was almost as amusing as a vaudeville performance, and Lilligore, with the soul of an impresario, introduced a fourth sensational feature. He called the leading-lady, so to speak, for the defence.

The State had depended on Bianca Holland to establish a motive on the part of the accused. The defence would prove by her that Stephen Arrowsmith had even a stronger motive.

Bianca, an impressive contrast in her mourning with the garish mistress of her dead husband's profligate brother-in-law, took from the hand of the prisoner's counsel a proffered letter.

"Have you ever seen that before?" he asked.

"I have."

"Tell the jury where and when, if you please."

"I found it among my husband's correspondence, about a month ago."

"By whom is it written and signed?"

"By Stephen Arrowsmith, who married Mr. Holland's youngest sister."

Marvin Lilligore reached for it again.

"I ask to read it and offer it in evidence."

The Court bowed.

The letter, dated a week prior to the murder, ran:

"DEAR E. H.—I have just learned that you are going abroad for an indefinite stay. Several times of late I have tried to get an interview with you, without success. I must see you before you go, and you must arrange to make me a substantial payment on account of my properties. If you refuse me I will not be responsible for the consequences. I'm a desperate man and my back is against the wall. I would be justified in taking extreme measures. You have been starving me for years. Now I must eat or— Well, it's your own risk. Don't try me too far."

To Lilligore's surprise, the District Attorney offered no objection.

The final witness for the defence was Owen Wills. He took his place on the stand carrying a pig-skin travelling bag, which he placed beside the chair. Unlike Pandora's fabled box, the one gift that emerged from this bag when it was opened was the gift of Hope. Hope for Calvert. For its contents quite overthrew what had been in the first trial an apparently damning bit of evidence against him.

The bag was practically filled with paper-files, each of the identical pattern used by Holland's slayer. And each

tagged with a different name and address.

From a hundred New York business houses and offices Wills had personally collected them.

CHAPTER XI

FOLLOWING the delivery of the verdict at the former trial, Owen Wills and the man who had sat at his left throughout the entire proceedings had left the Criminal Courts Building together, crossed the street and entered a saloon on the corner. The afternoon was bitter cold. It had begun to snow. Wills wore a mink-lined coat with an otter collar. The lean, sinewy, middle-aged man shivered in his tan overcoat with the threadbare edges. In response to Will's invitation he said: "Rye whiskey." And when the bottle was before him he poured out a full glass, and, with : "Here's to you," drank it, undiluted, at a single gulp.

Wills drank the highball of Scotch that was before him more leisurely. He was facing the wide bar-window, and noting the snow, which had suddenly thickened so that the court building opposite was hidden by its white curtain, said:

"We should have brought our umbrellas this morning."

His companion paused in the act of lighting a cigarette and glanced over his shoulder.

"Oh, just a squall," he said. "I hate umbrellas. Haven't carried one in years."

"I'm rather like a cat," Wills rejoined. "Hate to get a drop on me. However, it may not last. This isn't a bad place to spend the time. Suppose we take that table over there. Have another rye?"

When they were seated the lean man, pouring his second drink, said: "Foregone conclusion, that verdict, eh?"

"Do you think so?"

"Sure. Nobody else to do it but he."

"Apparently not. But—have you heard of what's happened in those law offices since?"

"Not another murder?"

Wills smiled. "Well, hardly. Only thefts. Petty thefts. Two of them."

"What ice do they cut?"

"They're more mysterious than the murder. Calvert was there to kill Holland. But no one was there to steal a document from the office safe or to take a volume from the desk in the room where the killing was done."

"How do you mean—no one there? There were clerks, stenographers, fellows reading law, weren't there?"

"Oh, yes. I suppose so. But no one with a motive. Persons like that don't steal just for fun, you know."

"Kleptomania."

"Nonsense. It would have to have been an acute case, and the odds against it are so great it's untenable."

The other finished his second drink.

"That's true enough," he said. "I know, in a way, or did, most of the people in those offices. Holland was a family connection of mine."

Wills appeared surprised.

"Really?" he queried. "Then your interest in the trial wasn't altogether impersonal."

"No. I was subpœnæd by the defence. Though I don't know what for. I didn't come in until after the deed was done. Never laid eyes on Calvert till I saw him in court. But I had to be there every day, and they didn't call me after all."

"A connection of Holland's, eh?" Wills said, his surprise still echoing. "Then, of course, you hadn't much sympathy with the accused."

"I had and I hadn't."

"How's that?"

"Elliot and I never got on. I hated him. But to kill a man because you want his wife—that's going a little too far."

"I should say it is. I always understood that Holland was a very fine character. Wasn't he?"

"He was a scoundrel." The speaker rapped on the table, and when the bartender looked at him he ordered a repetition of their refreshment.

Wills, passing him his cigarette case, said:

"A scoundrel! Why, you amaze me."

"Yes, a damned scoundrel. With all his money he persisted, for his own selfish personal interest, in keeping me in something pretty close to penury."

"I should never have thought that of him," Wills rejoined.

"Now that he's out of the way I'll come into my own. And it was the same sort of thing he worked on his wife. Yes, and on that fellow Calvert. They were starving for each other; but he was determined to keep her for himself. I don't wonder Calvert drove that steel point into his brain. He was forced to it."

"You might have been tempted to do it yourself, eh?"

"Might have been? I was. More than once I was." His manner and tone were almost ferocious. "I don't see now how I kept from it."

"Your better nature, I suppose."

"Probably. Or lack of nerve. It takes nerve, you know, to sneak up on a man from behind and with a hard, swift blow, drive a steel point into his brain. *Some* nerve! Believe *me!*"

"I can readily understand that. You've got to be close to insanity to do it."

"I've been close to insanity for more than six months." He drank his third brimming glass of whiskey, neat. "Would you like to hear about it?"

"I should, indeed," said Wills, "if you don't mind."

His companion, markedly reticent throughout the trial, had become contrastingly loquacious under the stimulus of his libations. He didn't mind. He told his story fluently, with considerable elaboration, and not unpicturesquely; Wills, meanwhile, taking care to keep the narrator's glass filled, and cigarettes at his hand.

"I married Elliot Holland's youngest sister," he began, "when I was twenty-eight years old. I was a clerk in a shipping office at the time, with nothing but my salary to depend on, and the family disapproved of me for that reason. You know how these rich and fashionable families are. But three years after we were made one, her father died, and she came in for something like a quarter of a million."

It seemed that with that quarter of a million the pair had a pretty lively time of it. They went round the world. They lived in Paris for a year, and in London for another. Then the wife was killed in a motor-car accident. There were no children. She had not made a will. The bulk of her estate was invested in real property.

Under the law the widower was entitled to the income from this for life, but, of course, could not touch the principal. The personal property he soon squandered. He had developed a passion for gambling. Especially for horse-racing. At thirty-eight there was nothing left but the income from the realty. He had attached to himself a beautiful young woman of the half-world, to whom he could deny nothing she asked for.

To provide the required funds he postponed and postponed the payment of mortgage interests, allowed taxes to accumulate, the properties to run down for lack of needed repairs. Tenants refused to renew leases and new tenants were not to be had. When foreclosure was threatened he went to Elliot Holland. And Elliot Holland had agreed to advance what was necessary to pay the arrears of taxes and interest, and to put the properties into proper repair. In consideration of this, though, he was to be made trustee. There was nothing for the poor brother-in-law to do but accept. But he wasn't in the least grateful. Holland was not doing it for him. He knew that. He was doing it for himself and the others to whom the realty would eventually revert.

"I can't altogether agree with you there," Wills interrupted. "He might have let the mortgages be foreclosed, bought it all in at sheriff's sale, and cut you out altogether."

"That would have meant a bigger in-

vestment. This way he paid less and accomplished practically the same result. Every dollar that came in he turned back into the properties. Enlarged them, remodelled them, kept them always in superfine condition. I got almost nothing. Sometimes less than nothing. And my hands were tied. Persuasion had no effect on him. Threats he laughed at. He was a piece of stone. Hard as iron and cold as ice. In the six months prior to his—his death, I had less than four hundred dollars. And I went through hell."

He paused to refresh himself and light another cigarette. Then:

"Were you ever in love?" he asked, putting down his glass.

"Not very seriously."

"Then you won't be able to understand."

"Try me," Wills suggested.

"I'm mad over Leda. She's beyond words to describe. She's been devotion itself. But she wasn't made for poverty. She wilts under it. She's put up with things, hoping for a turn. Last fall she met a man—an acquaintance of a friend of hers—who admired her at sight. She told me all about it. He'd do about everything in the world for her but marry her. He's a millionaire twice over. He'd give her all she craved. Apartment, clothes, jewels, automobile, chauffeur, everything. Can you imagine how I felt? I saw her fading every day and could do nothing. And I knew she had that offer in her mind, every minute. He let it stand open. I wanted her to be happy. Oh, God, how I wanted it! I'd have broken into a bank and looted it for her if I could. Don't you see how I was tempted? With that real estate out of Holland's hands and with a trust company that wouldn't put every penny of income back into it, I'd soon be getting fifty thousand a year. Do you wonder I was tempted?"

"No, I don't," Wills answered.

The lean, sinewy man leant nearer to him across the table.

"I am tempted beyond my strength," he whispered—"*almost.*"

Ten minutes later Wills was driving him uptown in a taxicab. He was drunk. His story told, he had gone to pieces suddenly after the final drink. There are some dipsomaniacs like that.

"Shay," he stammered as the vehicle turned into West Twenty-second Street, where he and his light-o'-love lived in one big second-floor front room, "you gotta come in an' shee Leda. She's worth killin' a man for."

"Thank you," Wills returned. "But you'll have to excuse me this evening. I'll come some other day. Which reminds me. Who am I to ask for? You haven't given me your name."

"Arrowshmith. Stephen Arrowshmith. Whash yoursh?"

"Mine?" Wills queried. "Oh, yes! 'Balderdash.' I'm sorry I haven't a card."

He saw him out and watched as he climbed the high stoop, leaving gaping footprints in the cushions of snow that covered the steps.

Of course he had known from the first that it was Stephen Arrowsmith. Lilligore had subpœnæd him at Wills's request. And Wills had selected that seat beside him with precisely this end in view.

"*Hate umbrellas. Haven't carried one in years,*" he quoted with a smile, as the taxi sped eastward, seeking Fifth Avenue, beyond the curtain of feather-like flakes. "*That's the key that will open poor Lee's prison door for him.*"

CHAPTER XII

On leaving the stand, after his testimony in the second trial, Wills slipped out of the courtroom through the side-door. His work was finished. He wished he might stay for Lilligore's summing-up. It would be quite different, he knew, from that barren oratorical effort which came at the end of the former trial. This time it was he who had everything and the District Attorney nothing. Never had there been a more complete turning of the tables. That double "plant" of the letter-carrier and the window-cleaner was some-

thing to be proud of, and the young lawyer smiled with pleasure, for it was he who had suggested it and arranged it. Lilligore had only to make vivid the application, which the jury must already see for themselves.

"It is far from safe to pin one's faith to the obvious."

That would be Lilligore's text. It was so obvious that a letter-carrier could have no use for a legal document which did not concern him that it never entered Manning's mind to consider him. Nor was it less obvious that a window-cleaner was not a man to take away a volume of law reports. And what could be more obvious than that a man who, having started to leave an office, returns for his umbrella, goes out directly he has secured it? You take it for granted. You'd wager your life on it. You'd be positive even that you saw him go.

In other words, from certain given facts we take other facts for granted. We say "this is," or "that is." But to learn later that what is, very often, isn't.

Lee Calvert, apparently, must have killed Elliot Holland. There was, seemingly, no other conclusion. No one else could possibly have got into that room. And he had a motive for desiring his death. Even had Arrowsmith's motive been known, he must be absolved, because he was absent at the time. No wonder that first jury convicted.

But now it was different. A doubt, at least, had been raised. And the finding of a file in the Gardener Brothers' storeroom identical with that found blood-stained beneath Elliot Holland's desk had lost all its significance, seeing that such files were apparently scattered all over Manhattan Island.

Yes, Owen Wills had no doubt whatever now that Lee Calvert would be acquitted. The Judge himself would refuse to accept a verdict otherwise. It would not be in keeping with the evidence.

So, in so far as freeing his friend went, his work was finished. But there was now a supplementary labour before him. Lee Calvert must be absolved as well as acquitted. The real culprit must be brought to book. And the real culprit, he felt sure, was waiting here in the anteroom, trepidantly a-tremble in all probability, because of what Leda —his Leda—had told him of her brief examination.

But when he opened the anteroom door it was to find the room empty. In the corridor he came upon the officer who had had the witnesses in charge.

"What have you done with them?" he asked.

"Nothing, sir. The woman testified and I understood the man wasn't to be called. I heard Mr. Lilligore say that you were his last witness. They asked if they might go, and I let them."

Wills descended in the elevator to the ground floor and crossed the street to the saloon on the corner. It was an even chance that he'd find them in the back room. But they were not.

He took a taxicab across town to the Ninth Avenue Elevated and travelled northward, alighting at Twenty-third Street, whence he walked two blocks to their lodgings.

They were not there. For a long while he stood on the corner watching for their return. While he waited a newsboy came by, bawling an "extra." He bought the paper and saw in great headlines:

"CALVERT ACQUITTED!"

* * * * *

It was between ten and eleven that same night when Owen Wills rang the doorbell of the Holland home in East Sixty-first Street and handing a *carte de visite* to the maid who responded asked for Mrs. Holland. He waited in the small reception room, to the left of the entrance hall, in which Lee Calvert had so restlessly paced on a certain October afternoon six months before. Waited to be eventually led up the same broad, curving staircase and along the same softly carpeted corridor to the same door.

In the little room that was like a hollowed opal Bianca and Lee were together. Their countenances seemed transfigured. And Owen caught in his heart a reflection of the radiance. Their joy overflowed. Their gratitude was too profound, too poignant for words. They made him sit between them on the little white and lavender sofa, barely large enough for three, each clasping one of his hands.

"No, I haven't been lost," he made answer to their chorused question. "I've been completing my labour of love. I thought you might care to know that you may now write 'Finis' to your tale of woe. It required some waiting on my part, but I was repaid. Arrowsmith, his Leda, and I had quite a sensation this evening, in their one room. It was nearly eight when they returned, and I had been sentinelling the house since before five."

"You don't mean that he confessed?" It was Bianca who asked.

"Everything. Fully. I convinced him that I knew. I outlined just what had happened, and he admitted or corrected. When he went back, supposedly for an umbrella which didn't exist, he slipped into Delray's office, unlocking the door and relocking it on the inside. He found then—and he considered it great luck—that the key also fitted the connecting door to Holland's room. His evil idea was to strangle. He had very strong hands. But questioned his success. In looking about for something that might serve his purpose, he opened the drawers of Delray's desk—only two or three were locked—and at the back of one of them found that file. He said there were two there. I suppose the other is in the drawer yet. Having done what he'd made up his mind to do, he waited in Delray's room until he heard the hue and cry raised, and then slipped out into the library again. Not a soul saw him. Indeed, he got as far as the outer office. Everybody was in the Holland room and with backs turned. All he had to do was to go in there, too, and ask what had happened."

"He's been arrested?" Calvert asked. "But of course he has."

Owen Wills shook his head.

"No," he answered. "He gave us the slip and he took Leda with him. I had a warrant in my pocket, you know. He went back of a screen in a corner of the room to get his hat or Leda's wrap or something. At least he said that. But whatever it was, he appeared unable to find it, and called for the woman. So she joined him. Neither of them came out again."

"What! There was a window there?" This, too, from Calvert.

"No, old chap. Not a window. A gun. He shot her and then himself, before I could turn round."

"Dead!"

"Both of them. Naturally he wouldn't leave Leda for that millionaire."

THE trouble with women is that the older they grow the more romantic they become, and the more romantic they become the older they look.

VIRTUE is woman's ability to put out the small fires which she is continually starting.

THE EQUINOCTIAL STORMS

By Helen Hersh

THE September equinoctial storms beat outside. Among the cushions of a long window seat a woman lay, and beside her was a sealed letter; every few minutes, as the wind flung itself shrieking against the window-panes, she shuddered, and fingered the unbroken seal. And all the time personalities that were parts of that complex person, herself, conversed silently within her, to each other. The three most prominent were unchained.

One was the child she naturally was. One was the cynical woman of the world she pretended to be. And the third, offspring of Maeterlink readings, Hindoo philosophers, and fashionable lectures, was a veiled mystic who insisted she was a soul that had passed through incarnations innumerable and had felt the hot breath of Invisible Powers, who toy with humans as with ants upon an ant-hill.

All three of them were depressed by the weather. The Cynic and the Mystic hadn't the courage to direct the opening of the letter. Gloomily they restrained the Child's eagerness to see what was inside.

Said the Mystic:

"At the end of the storms the last bead of the rosary will be told."

The Cynic laughed.

But her sister continued in a deep, dark voice:

"Laugh if you will, but I've kept count. We go, the three of us, by cycles of three, in love. Three men have loved and gone in the three years past. Three years each. Now has the fourth man come, his three years are up these storms. I fear the letter."

The other laughed again:

"Why be afraid? He's written me from the club and mailed the letter at 1 a.m. before."

"Oh, let's open it," cried the Child. But her elder sisters ignored her.

"His three years end—" began the Mystic in a raucous whisper.

"Piffle," said the Cynic. "There's no reason why he should go unless he's tired of me. There have been moments—there always are—of doubt. But yesterday he apparently loved me as much as ever. I am still young and lovely. This apartment is managed perfectly. The food is delicious. You're jealous because he loves me and the Child, and laughs at you."

A little moan came from the Mystic.

"Don't!" she said weakly. "Don't. I tell you he'll go as the others did. They go for foolish reasons—or for no reason at all. At the end of three years they all go. Like becalmed boats when the unseen wind arises. Ah, I fear the letter."

"Do let's open it and see what he says," said the Child during a momentary pause which seemed to show that the Cynic agreed with her Mystic sister.

But the Cynic went on roughly:

"I've never even had the satisfaction of tragedy or death"; she almost growled, "no sympathy or crêpe."

"No one will understand. He'll just go," murmured the Mystic.

Suddenly the Child cried out joyously because she heard a door bang:

"He's coming, he's coming! He'll tell us what's in the letter."

The Cynic listened, doubting:

"If he were coming he wouldn't have written," she said harshly.

"I'm sure I heard"—began the Child,

but she knew it had been only the wind and she went back to listening to the patter of the rain's fairy feet and wishing the other two would stop the conversation she didn't quite understand.

The Mystic, as usually was her way when she wanted to prove a point, began excavating in the mines of memory.

"The first one—" she began moodily—

"Pooh," snorted her worldly sister. "We've forgotten him."

"No, we haven't. First love is always the sweetest. But the memory of his has grown fainter. Like the scent of lilies blown away by the wind. I was very young then, fresh from my rebirth. You were only born then."

"He was a very dull boy," remarked the Cynic.

"I thought he was wonderful," said the Child.

"The next two—" the Mystic started—again she was interrupted.

"He's coming! He's coming!" shrieked the Child. But it was only the wind.

The Cynic was thoughtful.

"If I knew there was another woman, I'd make it uncomfortably hard for him to get away from me," she said.

The Child cried out shrilly:

"I love him. I love him. He loves me."

"He will go. He will go," repeated the Mystic monotonously. "I fear the letter. I will never open it."

The child started. "He's coming—" but she knew it was only the wind. "Oh, do let's read his letter. It will be a make-believe that he is here. Please, please, please!"

"He's afraid to tell me to my face," said the Cynic calmly, "so he writes me. I despise him already."

Slowly the woman among the cushions of the long window seat reached out for the letter that lay beside her, and broke the seal. The wind had risen to wilder heights and was beating the window-panes into a continual trembling, but it had blown the clouds away. The storms were over, and a flood of light, red as with the blood of the dying sun, flowed over the letter-reader.

"Well," said the Cynic, "he has gone. But there's some satisfaction in the thought that not many women could have held his love, hot and strong, as long as I did." She stopped suddenly as her voice became a little weak.

The Child sobbed wildly and murmured beneath her sobs.

"That horrid man has hurt my feelings. I wish someone else would come and pet me until I feel better—I'm lonely—I—" her sobs became fainter and fainter, and finally they ceased entirely, for the Mystic had risen up in a triumphant vigour, and was choking her.

"In cycles of three," hissed the Mystic, "in cycles of three."

THE great secret of happiness in love is to be glad the other fellow married her.

TO speak of love to a woman is to make love to her.

TWILIGHT OF LOVE

By L. M. Hussey

I

HE entered the Library as a part of his routine, a way to put behind him certain of the hours. This afternoon it was very quiet and he chose one of the long tables that was deserted, save for a young woman, frowning over a book, as if the typography were extraordinarily poor. He seated himself and fingered, without opening, two or three abandoned volumes on the table, meanwhile glancing about the room.

He recognized some of the habitués. A short, swarthy man, with black eyes set a little slantwise—probably a Hindu—was taking notes from a volume printed in some oriental tongue. Pomeroy had seen him a score of times; once he had looked idly over the fellow's shoulder at the book he seemed to be translating; it was printed in scroll-like characters, Sanscrit, no doubt.

A very old man in a corner was reading a romance. Another old man, who came there every day, read nothing at all, but, staring down at the floor, seemed to have achieved almost a nirvana of emptiness.

Pomeroy sighed. It was depressing. He formulated a half wish that he had gone back to his rooms. However, he could have done nothing there but sleep.

Now he glanced sideways at the girl. He observed that her brow was still furrowed; her lips moved slowly like those of a child that can scarcely read; dropping his eyes to her book he saw that it was printed in German. Evidently she knew very little of the language. Her presence gave him a mild curiosity.

Now he scrutinized her more thoroughly. Her features were not bad, but they had an indefinable touch of insufficiency; something was wanting to make them attractive. More definitely, she was too pale and her brown hair, luxuriant enough, he thought, needed a skilful touch here and there to bring out the charm of pleasant curves. In all, she gave him a vague impression of pathos—the pathetic air that arises from self-depreciation, disagreeable in a woman. Presently she turned a page; he observed her perplexed frown deepen; he wondered why she was endeavouring to read a language obviously unfamiliar.

Whilst he still regarded her, speculating in his mind's idleness, she suddenly dropped the book, gave it a little push away from her, and uttered a low exclamation of discontent. Then, aware that someone was near, she looked up, met his eyes, and flushed a little.

He smiled.

"Struck a snag?" he asked.

For a moment she hesitated, as if conventionally weighing the propriety of answering him. Her eyes passed over his face in a swift appraisal; evidently the fact that he was not young reassured her.

"Of course I have," she replied. "When I went to school I studied some French and some German, but not enough to know anything about either. Just enough to tantalize me. Every now and then I get the idea that I'll do some hard work on one or the other of these languages—I always fail!"

She frowned naïvely; her rather unusual purpose amused him. Why did she trouble herself with such concerns?

—she was young enough to have other thoughts in her head.

"What were you trying to read today?" he asked.

She tapped the open book.

"Oh, some poems," she said, disconsolately. "Heine's. There's one here about a nightingale that someone told me was exceptionally good. I can't make it out."

Pomeroy reached for the book.

"Let me translate it for you," he said.

He took up the book and read the verses.

He paused, smiled at her, and delivered the lines literally:

"Death is the cool night, Life is the sultry day. Now it grows dark; I am drowsy; the day has made me sad. Over my bed a tree looms up. Therein a young nightingale is singing: she sings only of love; I hear it even in dreams."

He lowered the book and she nodded at him with an expression of bitterness.

"Yes," she said, "you do it easily. I can never learn anything; sometimes it seems to me that I'm about the most useless person in the world!"

Her frank discontent interested him, stirred his curiosity. Moreover, it pleased him to talk with her, a young girl; this was more agreeable than the dullness of his club, or any of his books, of which he was mostly tired, or the stupid staring out of his window at home until he fell asleep. She was palpably a somewhat melancholy one, finding a lack in life and herself.

Regarding her more critically, he came to the opinion that she was not without charm; her face needed a certain assurance and more the habit of smiles; a smile might easily give a glamour to her features. She was waiting for him to speak; he drew his chair a little nearer.

"You've been frank," he said. "Let us suppose we really know each other better—confidantes in a sense. It's pleasant to talk to you—somebody new, somebody that's young, that has all sorts of unknown possibilities ahead. I don't discover much to interest me any more. You're young; you're at that excellent time when living is a sort of constant experience in unreality—so you understand? I mean, that your expectations are more intimate, in fact, more real than the things that actually happen."

She was resting her chin in her elbow, looking intently into his face. At his concluding words she surprised him by exhaling a sharp, contemptuous sniff. He met her eyes a moment, ignored her exclamation, and continued.

"Imagine my position," he said. "I'm nearly fifty years old—a bad time of life when you've nothing that you're persuaded is important enough to do. In a few years I'll be an old man, I'm certainly long past being a young one—just now you find me hanging in the air, so to speak, neither young nor entirely old, an extremely uncomfortable age!"

He laughed a little, but her face remained grave.

Dropping her elbow, she began to speak, uttering her words in her somewhat monotonous voice, a voice lacking cadences.

"It's all right for you to talk to me if you want to," she said, "but you certainly won't find me interesting. I used to believe I could interest somebody—I never could. I wish I were twice as old as I am—I'd be your age. You talk about expecting things! I wish I could *stop* expecting!"

Her lips came together firmly, pressed out into a harsh line. He met her eyes; for an instant they regarded each other with a steady gaze.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "What's happened to you?"

She tapped her fingers impatiently on the edge of the table.

"Don't tell me about not being able to discover any interest," she said. "It's not that I can't imagine interesting things—you can't have what *would* interest you."

He began to question her, and for a time she answered him with the same colour of bitterness in her sentences. But little by little a part of this mood seemed to pass; their talk became more

circumstantial; she told him more about herself.

She lived with her mother, one of those singular, aloof women, it seemed, out of touch with the customary actualities, a Christian Scientist or something of the sort. The two women had very little interest in each other for they were at opposite poles. So the girl was left wholly to herself.

She spent her time as one will to whom the hours are periods that must be bridged in some way—without enthusiasm, in discontent, not infrequently, he thought, in emotions of despair. Certainly he had been right in his initial surmise—she lacked assurance. Yet she was interesting.

Glancing about him, his eyes strayed to the dial of the large clock on the wall and it surprised him to discover that nearly two hours had passed.

A measure of genial comfort entered his consciousness. It had been an agreeable afternoon.

The girl was speaking now, telling him something or other about her early home; he listened perfunctorily, more interested in the scrutiny of her face, watching her moving lips, her little half-listless gestures. More composed now, her face lost the greater part of its tenseness, the lines were more gracile, the curves were more young.

His appreciation of her youth increased. It was refreshing to sit near a young girl, to receive some of her confidences, to find, in a degree, an easy intimacy with her. It surprised him when he reflected upon the rarity of this experience; he knew some women, but not young women, no girls. She made him feel less old himself. It was flattering to perceive that she acknowledged his capacity to understand her, to enter into sympathy with her, to comprehend the subtleties of her thought. She did not wrap herself in the cloak of reticence with which the young make themselves inscrutable to the old. By her frankness she acknowledged his own inner youth.

She paused, glanced up at the clock, and rising suddenly told him she must go.

"But we'll see each other again?" he suggested.

Her eyes met his a moment and then she smiled. It was the first full-curved smile she had given him, and in that second he discovered a swift and touching charm in her face. Opening her little hand-bag she took out a card. She extended her hand with the card between her fingers, and, smiling his thanks, he took it.

"Yes," she said, "if you want to talk to me again, you can come some evening and see me. I'm nearly always home. There's . . . there's nothing better to do. . . ."

Her concluding sentence was voiced with a return of the old bitter touch. For a moment she stood near the table with a somewhat awkward hesitancy; neither spoke again; rather abruptly she walked away.

His eyes followed her as she walked the length of the room. He was in good spirits when he stood up and with a glance about him, stepped toward the door himself. His mind dwelt upon the girl as he made his way out of the building and took a taxi home.

II

He let a day or two pass, but in the end he found himself impatient and he wrote to her.

It was with some hesitation that he did this, for now he felt the gap of their ages; it looked a little silly for him to call on her. He tried to persuade himself that he went as an old friend might go, in a fatherly way perhaps, and to a degree this facile interpretation of his interest satisfied him. Inwardly, however, he knew his emotions were more complex.

He sat down at his desk and wrote her a short note, addressed the envelope, scanned the name—Virginia Mylin—and found its sound agreeable. Then, sealing the letter, he walked to the window and looked out idly at the street.

He lived near the centre of things

and there was always a crowd going back and forth beneath his windows; the street was full of automobiles that struggled for precedence. It was often his custom to stand here in a sort of sensual and intellectual numbness, permitting the minutes, with which he had nothing better to do, to pass unheeded. To-day he felt more in touch with things, more of the urge and sensation of life. The girl, he thought, had something to do with that. It was good to know young friends.

She answered his note promptly; two days later he set out to call on her. When her reply came he had studied the handwriting with interest. It had some character. She set down her words in a nervous chirography a little difficult to read. There was no schoolgirlish roundness to her writing. Her script accentuated his sense of her complexity, her curious psychology. He went over in his mind the details of their single, surprising meeting, and found her personality very shadowy; for all her frankness she had by no means revealed herself.

At a suitable time in the evening he set out, unusually eager, interested and anxious for their renewed conversation. But as he approached her street he found himself shrinking a little. His customary aloofness asserted itself, his habit of routine, his cautious tendency to only the repetition of tried and insignificant events.

Once or twice he thought he would not go back; there was a palpable lack of proportion in this call—an almost old man, a young girl. But his admission that he was nearly old stayed his retreat. He was old enough to abandon some conventions; no one would misinterpret his actions.

She lived on an obscure street, a faintly shabby street, one of those thoroughfares that, having passed their original importance, seem to withdraw from the uses of other streets in a sort of spinster-like and ineffectual disdain. The houses were old, their fronts stained, their brown steps worn into hollows; it was all very quiet.

He stopped in front of her house, ascended to the outer landing, and rang the bell.

Following upon his ring there was some sort of a subdued confusion inside.

A moment later the girl herself came to the door.

For an instant his glance passed over her shoulder and he made out a pair of disappearing feet, going up the stairs. This was doubtless the mother, the mother of unrealities. Now his eyes returned to the girl; she was holding the door open for him to enter; her lips, unexpectedly, were smiling.

The smile disconcerted him a little. He had imagined this moment of meeting, seeing it in terms of their initial encounter. Then she had not displayed the habit of smiles.

He followed her into the house; they turned from the hall and entered the "parlour"; he stood awkwardly near the door a moment until she pulled two chairs near each other and invited him to sit down.

Their eyes met, and she was still smiling. Her appearance surprised him; she seemed, not more young, but more ardent, less harsh, less self-denying. Her cheeks, that he remembered as marked by an even pallor, had touches of colour. Her frock was girlish, attractive, the white throat emerged from it in a gracious column. She began to speak about something, some trivial comment, and as he listened an astonishing understanding presented itself. She had prepared elaborately for his visit! He saw her seated an hour or more before her mirror, tinting her cheeks and lips, arranging her hair, trying the effect of her dresses. For her he had come, not in the fatherly rôle, but as an opportunity, a chance miraculously found, as a young man might!

He began to smile; he was touched, and he moved his chair an inch or two nearer hers as a gesture of unspoken intimacy.

But more than anything else, Pomeroy was flattered. Anticipating some

embarrassment in this meeting, he had planned a demeanour and a trend of conversation that would accentuate his age and thus make them both at ease. Now he dismissed this purpose without hesitation.

He felt closer to the girl, and grateful to her, in that she had perceived and accepted his fundamental youth frankly rather than in terms of the exterior given him by the years. His consciousness of a barrier between them passed like an unpleasant season; old, tantalizing warmths caressed his spirit. He was suddenly proud, quietly elated, and he believed that in spite of all his disillusionments he might still be capable of ardour.

There came a moment of pause in their little conversation; he leaned toward the girl and spoke in a low voice.

"The chances of life are curious!" he said. "How unexpectedly I met you!"

"And how luckily!" she answered.

"Do you really feel that?"

"Yes, really! I wanted to know somebody dreadfully! I was—absolutely lonely!"

"I'm sure that we're going to know each other well," he said. "I've felt very much alone myself in these times. One needs some good friend . . . an intimate. . . ."

"Don't put it in that way!" she interrupted him. "It isn't that we're *going* to know each other. Somehow I feel we've been so frank, so quick to understand each other, that already there's an air of old acquaintanceship about us. . . ."

She paused; they looked across the space between them; their eyes met.

Both were silent.

A certain necessity, not fully apparent, stirred in these moments, like another atmosphere, another air to breathe, something in its effect more potent than speech, to which speech was inadequate. Pomeroy found that he was strangely nervous, even a little embarrassed.

He was uncertain and without confidence. His gaze wavered, and his eyes dropped from hers, passing to the smile on her lips, apprehending the faint suggestive droop of her head, the little pulsing rhythm of her breathing visible in a slight filling and contraction of her slender throat. She seemed to wait, to want, to expect.

Almost in fear he put out his hand and his fingers touched hers. She did not push his hand away, but urged him with a swift responding pressure. His uncertainty passed; his assurance was given life. He drew her toward him, his arms enclosed her, and he kissed her.

A second later he was whispering his only half-believed fears.

"Dear," he said, "you're so young; you need a young lover. I've come too late and you only imagine that you can care for me. In a few years I'll be an old man—you'll have to forget me!"

She did not answer, but touched his face with languorous fingers and each caress astonished him with its given delight. Little by little he began to accept the miracle, this recrudescence of old joys, the new youth, the fabulous renascence of dreams. His mild spirit found even a certain justification in it; he had been too kind to women and they too clever for him. He recalled, in an instant of recollection, the undeserved pain that had come from his former wife. Close to this young girl, in the charmed prison of her arms, a mystical understanding seemed to reveal itself, a law of life about to be fulfilled, that assured him at last a compensation, a weighing in the other side of the scales, earned pleasure for pain.

Presently their conversation was renewed and they began to confide the intimacies of their lives. She was very discontented, sometimes she was almost hopeless. Her mother, the woman of strange faiths, lived in another world and was in no sense a companion. She suffered from being alone; she had known moments of profound despair.

"I'll take you away from all this," he said.

But her confessions made her a little melancholy, and when he arose to go,

when they kissed again, she looked into his eyes gravely.

"I've wanted a lover for a long time," she said. "First I wanted a young lover, and no one came. I used to go out-of-doors at night and walk and walk, and then I hoped that I'd find an adventure. But everything was common and I would come back home almost sick. I feel safe with you . . . you know some of the disappointments of life!"

He kissed her again and waved to her as she stood at the door watching him go down the street, but her final words had chilled him a little. A part of her charm was spoiled for the moment; there was some return to his first impressions of her, when he had felt at once her insufficiency, her almost old-maidish pathos. Her confession had sullied a part of the glamour, deprived him of some portion of his pride. His rôle was not so much that of one who conquered miraculously, in spite of the oppressive years, but of one who was accepted with pathetic eagerness, because there were no others.

Presently, however, this cloud to his pleasure was dissipated by warmer recollections, and the charm of the hours in prospect. When he reached his rooms he was smiling.

Before retiring he looked at himself earnestly, in the glass, measuring his face against his age. The study seemed to satisfy him, for he was still smiling as he turned out the light and stepped into bed.

III

THE next morning he wrote his first love letter since the days of his youth; this was a profound pleasure. In the afternoon he went to his club and found the old fellows there strangely agreeable, since they seemed so inferior to himself. They were old, and their words and acts acknowledged the fact; he had a secret they could never understand. Someone told him he was looking exceptionally well and asked for the address of his doctor; he laughed at the ass, but said nothing.

That evening they went out together to dinner and once more he found her wholly charming. The moment of doubt, the pathetic moment, with which the first evening had been clouded, was gone and made no return. When they entered the restaurant she slipped her hand through his arm and he was proud of their advance through the aisle of tables. It seemed to him that many men must envy him, especially those who were old, in the full sense, with their youth gone for ever; he was not old!

This was the initiation of some months of entire delight. They did all that young lovers would do; they walked arm in arm through the streets; they motored out into the country and dined together in the obscure dining rooms of village inns; they went to the theatres and afterwards visited the cabarets. Sometimes they remained at home and read stories out of the magazines to each other.

He still strolled into his club from time to time, but no one knew of his love affair. It seemed impossible to confide this, although his secret knowledge of it never failed to establish his sense of superiority. But to make the others know of his luck—he shrank from that. On this point his feelings were complex. He felt them for the first time on one of those occasions when he and Virginia were having dinner together.

They had gone to a roof garden and during the progress of the dinner he was surprised to see one of the old fellows of his club come in with another man, a stranger. Suddenly he developed a desire to remain unobserved; the girl across the table was smiling at him with affectionate glances; he did not want this idiot to see her.

In a measure, he was ashamed, ashamed that the other might suspect his response to these languorous smiles. His wish was attained; the two men passed without observing him or the girl. Afterwards he accused himself of a certain baseness, because of his unexpected shame.

The memory of this incident passed for the glowing days overshadowed it. They were very close to each other now and in his secret way he indulged all the minutæ of love.

He wrote her nearly every day, filling his letters with sentimental phrases that stirred him deeply as they flowed poetically from under his eager pen. He brought her flowers and gifts; he watched her moods; by her side he inclined his head to catch her low-spoken words, oblivious to any that might watch him. She was always tender, always sweet.

Yet presently he thought he observed a change. She seemed to pass from the languor of her customary moods to an almost inevitable and surprising ardour, as if some fresh flame burned in her heart.

This was manifested to him, not so much in embraces of greater fervour, in kisses that pressed more warmly on his lips, as in the surprising new glow of her eyes, the sudden, enigmatic smiles, the unexpected, rapturous intakings of breath—in ways that, curiously, were almost divorced from his participation.

Sometimes, when he talked to her, she scarcely seemed to hear; watching her face, he would see her eyes open wider, looking past him, as if at something precious beyond his forgotten nearness. Frequently he was surprised, on coming to her home, to find her almost cold; she would take his hand, press his fingers perfunctorily, and without apparent response. And then, yielding herself to his greeting embrace perhaps a moment later, she would seem all fire, that remote fire, confusing, that began to bring him doubts.

He found too that they were not together so frequently. For a long time he had seen her nearly every evening; now she made excuses, but often, after an absence of several days, she repaid him with hysterical embraces.

Nevertheless, his assurance was diminished by disturbing uncertainties. He no longer felt, in a continuous, unswerving stream, that consciousness of superiority and pride. Something had interposed itself betwixt them, an impalpable veil, fogging his certainties.

One evening, as he was preparing to call at her home his telephone rang. On answering he found it was she, asking to be excused, pleading a headache.

Deeply disappointed, he consented, and the hours before bedtime loomed up before him like impassable obstacles.

It had been three days since they were together.

He seated himself in a chair, disconsolate, and stared down at the carpet.

Slowly he reviewed the difficulties of the past few weeks. No words of any change had passed between them—and suddenly he felt that an understanding was necessary.

In a measure they had lost the habit of confidence, accepting each other too easily. They no longer had those intimate talks that searched out inner, mutual secrets.

He felt that he must tell her of his fears, of his perturbations; she would see then; she would confide; and the days of old assurance, like a returning tide, would flow warmly back again. As he resolved upon this his doubts cleared, he felt easier, and the simple confession seemed all that was necessary.

But he was impatient to make it. Many times he got up and walked about the room, strode to the window and stared down at the crowded street, full of shadows and the hurry of dusk shapes. It seemed impossible to wait for another day. He determined to go now; she would be glad in the end for his coming.

A few minutes later he was in the street.

As he neared her house his mood expanded, his heart beat faster and his pace was more hurried. Some of the old, confident delight was in his blood again, the romantic joy of playing the young lover. He turned a corner; he was on her street.

Passing an arc lamp he glanced at his watch and found it later than he had supposed—after ten o'clock. Per-

haps she was in bed. He slowed his step a little and to a certain extent began to regret his precipitancy. But now he was near her home and after all it would harm nothing to stop and see if there were still lights in the house.

He was already looking up at the door when he saw it open, he heard her voice, she came out—there was a young man at her side!

They stood talking a moment and then the young fellow ran down the steps and hurried up the street. From time to time he turned back and waved his hand. In the shadow, watching this, Pomeroy had the bitter remembrance of his own parody of this part, his many goings from this house, waving back at the figure on the doorstep.

He still stood on the pavement in a numbness of emotion. The young man disappeared around the other corner. The girl, before going in, looked idly across the street, and then, turning her head, glanced in the direction of the old man, a few yards distant.

For a few seconds she regarded him without recognition. This passed; she comprehended his identity; her body straightened, followed by a faint swaying that made her lean against the door-frame, as if in support. Still numbed, Pomeroy approached her, unquestioningly, with no search for a motive.

She made him an abrupt gesture of beckoning and ascending the steps he followed her into the house. They entered the parlour and here she turned and faced him.

"I knew you'd discover some time!" she said. "I hadn't the heart . . . the courage . . . to tell you. . . ."

He was without words. He stared at her stupidly. His mind was strangely empty, all agility of thought passed as if under the malignancy of a curse. He felt tired, he felt old.

"Don't blame me," she said. "I thought I wanted you! I wanted *somebody* and you came; I waited so long, I was so hopeless! You were gentle, you were kind—it seemed to me I could give up the things I had dreamed just to be sure of your kindness, your affection. How could I tell I was about to find the *young* man!"

She paused; she waited for him to speak, but still there were no words to say. He began to feel oppressed, as if, in that familiar room, there was an insufficiency of air to satisfy the dry craving of his lungs. He turned suddenly, strode out into the hall, and like one who escapes, he ran down the steps and walked swiftly away.

He thought he heard her calling after him, but he did not turn; at the sound of her voice he hurried his retreating steps.

A moment later the night air and the quiet brooding streets returned to him his lost mental processes. Immediately an immeasurable bitterness entered his mind.

He recalled the girl as he had first seen her—almost charmless, ineffectual, pathetic in her self depreciation. Then *he* had played this simple, ironic part: his task had been not to furnish love, but assurance. He had assured her, swept away her doubts, destroyed the memory of her old disappointments, brought into being the possibility of her charm—for someone else!

His bitterness passed into anger. His eyes re-enacted the witnessed scene of parting—the young man, the faithless girl. As he thought of the other man his anger increased and a malevolent desire to destroy burnt savagely in his mind. He was strong enough for this, not too old for this!

He had been walking without purpose, without goal. Now, glancing up, he was surprised to see the street of his club; already he could make out some idle shapes at the big windows. In this instant of orientation he was at the summit of his rage—and also the summit of his romantic efflorescence. A second later the flame collapsed—and he found himself stumbling up the steps of the club.

The door-man obsequiously pulled back the doors. He walked in unsteadily. A couple of old fellows nodded at him. He sank into one of the cushioned

chairs and an immense enervation seemed to possess his body.

But little by little this weariness passed. He began to experience a curious, unexpected sense of ease, that puzzled him. Slowly he glanced about. The old men were stretched out like him in their chairs, placid; they were at ease too. He began to understand.

After all, this was the desiderate estate. . . .

They were all at ease together, they shared the same placidity, the calm of fulfilment, the calm of forgotten hopes. No one of them was under the necessity of dreaming any more; they were at a truce with dreams. They were all old men.

He sighed. He no longer found himself in any way superior. Instead, he felt the slow, suffusing warmth of fraternity. . . .

TWO DREAMS DWELL IN HER EYES

By Mary Carolyn Davies

TWO dreams dwell in her eyes,
I cannot see them there,
But bow, in humble wise,
My head in prayer.

Two songs sing in her eyes.
I cannot hear them sing,
But ah, I hold my breath
With listening.

AFTER all, it scarcely pays to tell the truth. People would much rather have you lie than hear you tell the same story twice.

A DOCTOR is headed for success when his women patients begin to hate his wife.

A GREAT man is one who leaves footprints on the sands of time. But a wise man is one who covers up his tracks.

THE REWARD OF MODESTY

By James Dallas

HER name never appeared in letters more than half an inch high. She alluded to her own ability in the most disparaging fashion and regarded a press agent as the height of bad taste. Her picture never decorated cigar boxes; she preferred to bathe in water rather than in milk; she had a holy horror of divorce. Every night after the play she drove straight home. As a model young woman of excellent character it would have been hard to find her equal. As an actress, she was a dismal failure.

DUSK

By Irmengarde Eberle

THE wind is coming home
Old and walking slow
Quietly over the houses
And quietly through the street,
Passing the silent trees
And over the broad fields.

The wind is coming home
The old familiar way.
Tenderly touching the earth
And kissing the sleep-drug'd bay,
And wondering how he ever went
So heartlessly away.

The wind is coming home.
Still he has far to go.
He has been out to the ends of the earth
And now he wonders why.
The wind is getting old
And he has the heart to die.

THE DAWN

By John C. Cavendish

I

IT was during the ceremony of her sister's wedding that little Ruth had, for the first time, those curious desires.

The wedding had interested her, of course; it was the culmination of an enlivening courtship. For two years Ruth had enjoyed herself hugely. She was not quite thirteen when Howard first began to call at their home; it was she who had first caught them making love. Thereafter she planned and executed unnumbered charming ambuscades.

For them the garden was never safe; neither was the house. She was as slim as a spear of grass, she could walk as softly as a cat. The smallest tree was adequate to her concealment. Standing straight, pressed against the warm bark, she used to wait with gleeful patience. Presently their voices would be heard in the garden, their footsteps, their laughter.

On the occasions of her best luck, they would sit down very near, in the grass, close and intimate. Peeping around the tree, waiting for the optimum instant, she'd leap from her ambush just at that second when their lips closed in a kiss. A shrill laugh, a taunt or two, a cat-call—and little Ruth would run bounding across the lawn like a mischievous goat.

Or else, a favourite thing was to wrap herself in the folds of the drawing-room curtains. How many a time they had missed her there, passed right by her, brushed against her taut, small body, to enter the room in seeming isolation.

On these occasions she liked to make ghost noises: small rappings, little clickings with her teeth, a far-away, ambiguous whistle. Suddenly, realizing that they were observed, Edith would spring up from the sofa, rush to the curtains and shake her out of them.

"You little *fiend!*" she would cry.

Ruth always mocked her with her boisterous laughter.

Yet for several months before their marriage she had somehow felt quieter. She no longer enjoyed plaguing the pair, although her interest in them was in no degree diminished. A vague apprehension of seriousness came into her mind; something in this love affair troubled her; it was the sort of feeling one might have during the slow gathering of a storm.

She found herself immensely interested in the accumulating trousseau; she liked to finger the silken undergarments, the lacy camisoles, tie and untie pink and blue ribbons, stand near the bed gazing down upon pretty frocks spread out for friends. She herself consented to hemstitch half a dozen sheer handkerchiefs, with embroideries in the corners; the work gave her solemn, uncomprehended emotions.

Then it was decided that her own dress, to wear at the wedding, could have a really long skirt; that would make her a woman. She urged another point and it was granted. She could wear her hair up, any way she wanted to dress it. "And it will never be down again," she thought. "No more tails!"

The wedding was very quiet; they held it in their own home; some rela-

tives were there, a few friends, and the "Lohengrin" march was played on the piano as Edith and Howard came into the drawing-room. They stood in front of the minister, both of them tremendously serious. Someone tittered nervously from a corner across the room and the sound seemed to add something to the moment's curious solemnity.

Ruth in her dress with the long skirt, with her abundant gold hair up and coiled in braids about her head, watched with widening eyes.

The minister began to speak; her mind did not record all the words, but she knew they were very portentous.

And then, at last, the pair turned toward each other. Edith was strangely pale, save for sudden little gusts of colour that came and went in her cheeks like the leaping of flame, and Howard took her hand and they kissed before all in the room.

A moment later everyone was on his or her feet; they crowded about the bride; they kissed her; they shook hands with the bridegroom. But Ruth remained seated and a strange, new thrill tingled in her senses.

In some way that final kiss had awakened her, from all the many she had seen these two exchange. It touched her senses to response, it put dreams chasing through her mind. Suddenly, vicariously, she knew some of the pleasure of that kiss herself—and understood the wanting of caresses.

Someone touched her on the shoulder; it was one of her aunts.

"What's the matter, Ruth?" she asked. "Why are you so solemn?"

Ruth stood up hastily. She blushed; she was ashamed lest everyone could read her thoughts. She looked about nervously, shifted the weight of her slim body from foot to foot and awkwardly clasped and unclasped her fingers in front of her.

In some way she had lost her assurance, and a tremulous something, of which she was half afraid, had entered into her world.

II

THEY had gone now, Edith and Howard, and she was alone in the house with her father and mother. The silent rooms seemed oppressively quiet and strange. Ruth avoided her mother inasmuch as now, for the first time in her life, she was experiencing emotions that could not be confided. She knew her mother would not understand. Her mother would laugh and that would hurt.

She liked best to go out into the garden where she could sit for hours, staring up into the bluish green shadows of the trees, watching the clouds pass like white and pink birds across the space of the sky, listening to the suggestive murmur of the unseen wind stirring the grass and leaves. There were no more scrambling ascents of trees, no more searches for woodchuck holes with the dog, no more wild rolling down the slope of the little hill behind the woods. She was very quiet, very subdued.

For the first time in her life it came to her that this was a beautiful place, the garden, the little woods, the old house. Its beauty made her melancholy and touched her imagination. She tried to conjure up the faces and acts of people who had been here before she was born, before she ever drew a breath. She wondered if some other girl like herself had lived here, and wanted the things she dreamed of.

Presently her father noticed her abstraction and in the evening, when she came indoors at the sound of the dinner gong, her eyes cast down, her lips silent, he would make fun of her.

"Look at our Ruth!" he'd exclaim to her mother. "Since you let her put her hair up, she's grown too old for any of us!"

Sometimes Ruth blushed; she felt very silly, but inwardly she was angry. These people did not understand. They were miles away from her.

The Spring passed into the first days of Summer. One morning Ruth was wandering through the garden with the disconsolate dog when, looking over

the top of a separating hedge, she perceived that their neighbour's boy had come home on vacation from his first term at preparatory school. He was standing out on the lawn of the next house and she was astonished to observe that he looked entirely like a man.

The change was so pronounced that she did not recognize him at first. Now he wore long trousers; his hair did not spring up wildly all over his head as it used to; it was combed back straight and clipped very short above his collar. He gripped a little curved pipe between his teeth and now and then a gust of smoke swirled about his face and dissolved in sunshine.

This was an astonishing transformation and Ruth stared earnestly across the hedge. A moment later he turned and saw her. They looked at each other for several seconds, without smiling, without any gesture of recognition. He was the first to gain aplomb; he nodded his head and began to walk toward the hedge.

She did not move, but she felt her cheeks warm with swift blushes. She knew she would not be able to talk with him, for her tongue seemed incredibly dumb. She wanted to run away; how impossible that was!

When he was still some feet distant, he spoke.

"Hello, Ruth!" he exclaimed. "I'm awfully glad to see you!"

She answered him; her greeting was mechanical. She noticed now that his voice had changed also.

He came up to the green barrier, smiling.

"Just got back last night," he said. "Glad, too—although Lawrenceville is a very decent place. What've you been doing with yourself?"

"Nothing, Walter," she answered.

"Everything looks just the same around here," he went on. "Slow as ever. Nothing doing. No life. But I've had plenty of that this year, and I guess a little rest won't hurt me."

He laughed and the sound of his laughter implied fabulous experiences. He returned his pipe to his mouth and puffed languidly for several seconds. He even appeared a little bored.

Gazing at his face, Ruth was in a torment. She wanted to say something, something that would interest him, something in keeping with his experience. It came to her instantly that he must have met dozens of girls in the past year; how did they talk to him? But nothing save a stupidity passed her lips.

"Did you like it away from home?" she asked.

"Oh—pretty fair, pretty fair," he answered, speaking through half-closed teeth from which the stem of his pipe dangled with an almost personal nonchalance. "Better than sticking around here, of course."

He looked back across the lawn.

"There's the Old Man," he said. "Wants me to drive him into town this morning. Will you be home all day? This afternoon? We want to have a talk for old time's sake. If you're around when I get back, I'll come over . . ."

He nodded easily and stepped briskly away. She watched him go, until, afraid that he would turn back and see her, she dropped her eyes and walked slowly through the thick grass. For the first time she noticed how rapidly her heart was beating.

Then he was coming over to see her in the afternoon! She was afraid. She did not know how to talk to him. He had seen so much. How stupid he would find her!

III

She had nothing to say at lunch, because of her inward excitement. She wanted to get up from the table; suppose he would come looking for her, while she was still indoors? Yet when she was free she remained indoors; she was frightened.

Running up to her room, she changed her frock. She had a full-size dressing-table of her own now—the one that Edith used to have. Sitting before

this, she arranged her gold hair; it came to her then how often she had watched her sister doing this, expectant of Howard's coming. Her slim fingers dropped from the coils of her hair, fell on the edge of the table, lay there flexed as she looked musingly into the glass. What a new world had unfolded itself to her!

In the old days she used to tease Edith at her toilet; that was ages ago. Then she was a child, wore little dresses that ended just below her knees, and let her hair fly wildly over her shoulders, or wound it into a long tail that flopped against her back as she walked. Her mood became a little melancholy. She almost regretted the old days, the days when she was still a child. It was hard to be grown up.

This feeling passed into one of pride. Her cheeks flushed a little, her blood ran a little faster. A sense of the allure of the days to come entered her mind like a fragrance, like a wine. She raised her hands again and began patting in the angles of her hair. In the glass she met her own eyes and smiled in pleasure at her reflected image.

At last she was ready but now her fear had returned. She stood up, went to the door, hesitated, came back. She wanted to go; she lacked the courage. What would they talk about? What would she say? It seemed impossible for her to talk to him. Her imagination conceived him as an almost fabulous being, mysterious, inscrutable.

In vain she tried to reassure herself that she had known him for years, raced with him through the woods, climbed trees faster than she could climb them, caught field mice that he could never catch. Now he was a stranger, another being.

Finally she forced herself to go outdoors and was greatly relieved to discover that the garden was empty. She sat down on an old bench, under a tree.

Half an hour passed. Her mind was almost without thoughts, in a nirvana of formless but delightful dreams. Someone called her; she looked up; he was there.

He was dressed in a light suit, cut very tight, with slanting pockets, and a jaunty belt to the coat. He wore no hat and his hair was combed back meticulously and shone with high lights in the sun. His appearance pleased and frightened her. He was so tremendously assured; she was so timid.

"Sorry I didn't get back sooner," he said. "The old boy is a slow old person. Won't let me let her out at all. Wait till I take *you* out, Ruth! I'll show you some *real* driving."

He sat down beside her, crossed his legs, and lighting a cigarette, began to tell her about his experiences at prep school.

His escapades astonished her. She said nothing at all, listened, nodded her head, tried to cover her nervousness with an easy smile. This attentiveness pleased him and he expanded, became still more at ease and talked without pause. He began to speak about the sports at school.

"I didn't get on the team this year—but I'll make it this coming term."

Her admiration escaped her lips in a naive assuring.

"Oh! I know you will!"

"I think so," he remarked complacently.

"Of course! I *know* it!"

A second later she regretted her fervour. He met her eyes, saw her admiring glances, and with a smile he put out his hand to touch her. His fingers touched her arm, and a curious flush tingled along her skin. She wanted to jump up and run away, but she was powerless to move. He took her hand.

"Little Ruth!" he said, caressingly.

The warmth of his tone terrified her. She arose suddenly.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Oh—I . . . honestly I must go in! It's late. I must go in. You'll excuse me. You'll come again . . ."

She broke off abruptly and turning, walked away almost at a run, whilst he remained seated, staring after her in surprise.

As she reached the gravel path that led up to the house, she glanced back and saw him standing now, looking after her. This glimpse of him gave her a sudden, profound depression. What would he think of her? How absurd, how stupid she had acted!

She ran into the house and the tears trembled in her eyes, threatening the corners with big drops.

In the hall she met her mother with an envelope in her hand. Ruth was glad that it was a little dark; she did not want her mother to see her face.

"This is a letter from Edith," said her mother. "She wants us both to come in to-morrow to stay with her a few days."

Ruth was silent.

"I can't go now," her mother went on. "Maybe you'd like to go alone. I guess Edith is a little lonesome. Howard is away for a week."

The proposal came to Ruth as an unexpected avenue of escape. It seemed to her now that it would be impossible to stay here, meet Walter again, with the shame of her flight so recent.

"Oh, yes!" she cried. "Yes, mother! Let me go myself!"

IV

She left early the next morning, riding into the city on the same train with her father. At the station he put her into a taxi in which she drove to Edith's apartment.

Edith met her, kissed her warmly, and then they made a tour of the little apartment together. Everything was very pretty and Ruth felt a sentimental glow in the understanding of her sister's happiness.

She was immensely pleased with the reception Edith gave her. Edith treated her as if she were a very important guest; there was no reference to the days when she had been so foolish; they were like two women together. Her aplomb returned quickly. She became grave, womanly, at ease.

In the afternoon they went shopping and before their return stopped in at a tea room where they had small cakes and several cups of tea. This was an insinuating place, quiet, remote, full of murmured conversation.

Ruth watched young men and young women come in together, sit at the little tables, talk with their heads close. She felt a part of this life, accustomed to it; her nature seemed to expand and her experience was augmented.

When they arrived home, Edith developed a headache and decided to go to bed soon after dinner.

"I'm sorry, dear," she said. "Why don't you take a bit of a walk?"

That seemed an excellent notion and presently, as it grew dusk, she went out alone.

Near the apartment house a young man passed her who reminded her suddenly of Walter.

It surprised her then to realize that she had completely forgotten him. His memory now brought only a faint flush of her yesterday's discomfort. Perhaps she had been stupid and afraid, but it did not matter. The clamour of the city was in her ears, singing there like a promise. It announced the theme of limitless opportunity. By some means she had grown more assured.

Ruth paused at the corner and stood there, watching the crowds. Her eye examined all the girls who passed, scrutinizing them with critical judgment. The aloofness of those moments gave her a sense of superiority.

Above all her emotions, she was excited, expectant; the potentiality of some vague enchantment, to disclose itself presently, stirred in her blood. In a day, in an hour, she had changed. From the city she had acquired something of the city's audacity.

A man passed, glanced at her; she met his eyes. He turned back and smiled. In quick response, scarcely understanding the significance of her act, she returned his smile. He approached her and took off his hat.

"Good evening," he said.

She answered something, without attending her words, for now her heart

was beating faster, her assurance had gone, her fears had returned. Her eyes dropped, yet not before they had recorded the details of his face. He was not a schoolboy like Walter; he was a man!

He spoke to her again; her lips denied her will to answer.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "You're not afraid of me, are you, little girl? I didn't want to frighten you. You smiled; I thought you wanted me to talk to you."

Something in the sudden tenderness of his voice shamed and angered her. How quickly he had penetrated her secret. He saw how young she was, how little she knew. At first, in the dusk, she had deceived him, but only until he had come closer and spoken to her. She resented his changed attitude and found his sudden consideration hateful.

Her cheeks flushed; she raised her eyes and met his own fearlessly.

"No, I don't want to know you," she said. "What right have you to speak to me? Please let me alone!"

He looked a little surprised; an instant later he smiled and gave her a slight bow.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "Be careful when you smile the next time!"

Replacing his hat, he turned and walked away.

She stared after him until his figure was obscured in the dark, lost in the crowd.

Her mind reviewed the encounter and fittle by little her anger passed into a sense of satisfaction. It seemed to her that a very significant experience had been added to her necessary knowledge. For a moment at least she had fooled him, for an instant she had been able to play the part of a woman. A few more words, a slight increase of her assurance—and she could have talked to him easily! She looked about her with confidence. The next time she knew she would succeed.

Ruth turned slowly and walked back the way she had come. Her thoughts were not definite, they were vague as mists, but their nature was wholly pleasant.

When she reached the apartment house she was smiling. In the elevator she bent toward the mirrors at the side of the cage, patted her hair, readjusted a hairpin, took out her powder puff, and powdered her nose shamelessly. Some of the mysteries of life, those mysteries that aroused her fears, were passing. But the allure was immensely more potent.

V

Two days later Ruth went back to her home. She met her father in the evening and returned with him. At the door her mother kissed her, as if hers had been an absence of years. This display of emotion made Ruth smile a little, with the indulgence of one who has acquired a philosophy of toleration. How little her mother understood; how blind she was! For her, Ruth was still a child, still the object of protection. It did not matter. Perhaps her mother would never understand the change.

There was a pleasant dinner during which Ruth talked more than ordinarily, telling everything about Edith, her home, her habits, the excitements of the city. Once or twice she was surprised by a certain intent look with which her mother met her eyes. It puzzled her a little, but she went on, relating the incidents of her trip.

After dinner her father retired to some work in his study, but her mother remained.

For some moments they were silent. Ruth grew a little embarrassed. At last she stood up, looked about her with a counterfeited languor, and prepared to escape. Then her mother arose, came around the table and with a surprising impulse, circled the girl in her arms.

She said nothing at all. She only embraced her, hugged her close, and kissed her young, smooth cheek. Concealed in this act there was some emotion too subtle for expression, and in a measure Ruth sensed it. In the touch

of her mother's arms there were commingled a pathos of remembrance, of hope, of fear, of resignation. It was almost a silent caress of parting, when words are not said, lest they loose the hysteria of tears. It acknowledged a barrier, yet established a sympathy. Then Ruth knew that her mother understood.

A moment later her mother left the room, and almost unconsciously she wandered out into the garden. Only a faint light remained, flushing in the western sky, the lingering ghost of the departed day. It was the hour of hush; the crickets were not yet singing. A few feet in the air, close to the lower branches of a tree, a school of gnats danced their last figure before the night.

She had been there only a few moments when she heard quick footsteps in the grass. Without turning, she knew that Walter had seen her and was coming. An intuitive certainty told her that he had been watching, waiting for her appearance.

His nearness gave her none of her old fears, no former trepidation. An immeasurable experience seemed to lie between that last encounter and the second of this hour. She was even indifferent. She comprehended Walter—he was no mystery. A schoolboy. It was almost childish to talk to him.

"Hello!" he said. "I'm awfully glad you've come back. Terribly slow around here!"

In the dusk she smiled wanly, inscrutably. He looked at her face and something in her expression, this new, mysterious pose, puzzled him, shook his assurance. His easy words died on his lips. He stood in front of her awkwardly, holding his hat in his hands.

"Let us take a little walk," she said.

She moved off across the lawn and, sheep-like, he followed at her side. In a moment her languor passed, yet a certain melancholy persisted. There was no mystery in him—but there was excitement: the excitement of tormenting him, of fooling him, of stirring the emotions of his wanting.

This was her rôle and now she understood it; at last her heart had the knowledge of her power and her cunning. Now she was a woman.

THE LAKE

By Frances O. J. Gaither

THE west wind blew again last night
And swept the water hyacinths in . . .
Now yellow sands go blue bedight
Like some embroidered mandarin.

A MELANCHOLY man is one who has remembered more than he has forgotten.

THE POWER OF LOVE

By Winthrop Parkhurst

HE often read in the newspapers of men who exacted obedience from their wives with stinging whips. From his boyhood up, indeed, he had heard sodden stories of wife-beatings without end; and from all such tales of vulgar violence his aristocratic temperament revolted as from an ill-mixed drink. So when he married he resolved to conduct his home entirely on the principles of love. In his own house at any rate, he decided, there should never be one harsh word, one angry look to mar the placid perfection of his married life.

His plan worked remarkably well. The devotion of his wife was extraordinary. When a disagreement seemed imminent he steadfastly refused to raise his hand; and such is the power of love that his wife thereupon immediately agreed to do anything in the world that he wished.

Later on he gave her the cheque.

MY LIFE IS GLAD

By Harry Kemp

MY life is glad because of you:
You give me things as sweet as dew;
Soft as the falling of a flower
That breaks into a silken shower
Your raining kisses cover me
And break in petals over me.

A MAN'S ambition is a happy marriage. A woman's, a romantic one.

LOST LOVE

By Morris Dallett

I

I SAW Suzanne's wide eye before she caught sight of me, and by the time she had recognized in a black suit and yellow hat—which drew attention away from greying hair—the ambling playwright of three years before, I had marked her drooping mouth and the rouge on her lips. I had noted, too, the slant to her hat and the pretty brown ringlets of hair beneath. In truth, I had remarked the fact that Suzanne was almost exactly the same girl who had left the musical comedy stage some time before to marry a young friend of mine. And I was surprised that she had not changed.

I never *had* understood the affair: she was a very fast girl—a bad girl as I had known her—and he was actually prudish. To see them, one could have understood an affair, but surely not marriage.

So I was glad when Suzanne recognized me and waved a prettily gloved hand from across the sidewalk.

"Hello!" she called.

I sauntered over to her, and stammered a little breathlessly:

"How are you?"

"Hungry," she answered, and slipped her hand through my arm. "Take me to luncheon."

I willingly hurried her into the nearest café.

The head-waiter, who had known me in my earlier days, seeing whom I was with, led us to a nicely secluded table. He looked surprised.

"Am I as old as all that?" I murmured, changing my hat check from a trouser into a vest pocket.

"I come here several times a week and he recognized me," she smiled back, and began taking off her gloves. I looked at her again.

The gloves were long and bright red, matching in colour a belt around her waist and a cluster of cherries on the little hat. The dress itself was black, knitted like a sweater. The heels of her shoes were red, like the gloves and her lips: that I had noticed before.

I was trying to find out the condition of her hands when she turned to me suddenly and said:

"You look so well I know you haven't been writing lately."

I smiled all over, admitting the fact while ordering luncheon.

"Sorry I can't buy you anything decent to drink," I said.

"Do you want something to drink?"

"World without end, amen."

She called a waiter to her side and talked to him. He seemed to understand, and hurried off.

"I have a little gin left," she went on, turning back to me, "and they are going to put it into a lemonade for us."

I stumbled through a prayer of thanks and asked the obvious question with my eyes.

"Oh, then you haven't been hearing about me?"

"No. I have been away."

"I've been divorced from Curtis for three months."

"Really?"

"Yes. Almost four months now."

"Ah!"

"You aren't very surprised."

"I expected something of the sort."

"Why?"

"I knew you—and him; and I've lived several years of glorious life."

"But you don't know the reason?"

"No."

Her eyes almost closed, and she bit her lip.

"No."

I saw that the subject was not open for discussion just yet, so I bided my time and thanked God—who was certainly the wrong person—for the extra gin.

I had expected that the meat course would result in a story; but it was not until the waiter was pouring Russian dressing over hearts of lettuce that Suzanne remarked:

"I have the baby."

"Oh," I answered, vaguely wondering why I hadn't instinctively known that there had been a baby.

"I am going to tell you the story because—I don't know why, to tell you the truth. I suppose it is because you are the sort of person one usually does tell stories to."

I leaned over the table in anticipation.

"Look at your cuff."

It was in the salad.

"You knew Curtis," she went on.

I answered that I did.

"Well, then it will be more interesting to you." She stopped for a moment and seemed to be thinking.

"I am going back to the time I met him. But before that I want to tell you that I am inherently good; badness is a cultivated attraction with me."

I accepted Suzanne's statement with some reservation, and she knew it.

"You don't know."

I did know a good deal. Three years before we had played around together, and I had gleaned her history from her own lips. But her past was not the main part of her life: the present was the play, and the past was merely the incidental music, lending atmosphere.

She had been born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and had gone to school there for nine years. Up to the age of sixteen, when she became a waitress in a restaurant, she had been a good girl, a backward, shy slip of a thing with no manners or anything else of evident importance to the world. But from incidental diners, who took her on automobile rides and said things, she learned that she was of importance. Most of her friends already knew that.

One of the momentary travellers was a man connected with the theatrical profession, and he promised Suzanne that when he reached New York he would find her a position in a chorus. She had listened to other promises before, so when a letter arrived from a prominent producer—of whom she later saw a great deal—she was surprised. Of course it was the chance of her life. She took it. Her friends, who would become local shop-girls, envied her, and—for such is the way of women—said very nasty things behind her back. But that didn't feaze Suzanne. Her career was started—and in New York. Holy of Holies!

A chorus girl who wanted to keep alive devoted most of her energies, in those days of a few years ago, to enterprise off-stage. Living cost a lot, and to get a really substantial meal from an ordinary after-the-theatre party was something which required more than ordinary sagacity. But Suzanne was apt, and she learned to do it, to do it well. Her reputation, however, rose in indirect proportion to her success.

The memories of broad country meadows, and dew on wet grass, often troubled her, and at such times she felt that a breath of fresh air was imperative; it was absolutely necessary to get away from square city blocks, and high hats, and Waldorf lunches. To ask a young "friend" to motor her out wouldn't bring the desired freedom. It only meant dinner in a road-house sandwiched in between thick slices of unsavoury bread in the guise of automobiling.

So Suzanne had taken to dressing in simple, sincere little frocks each Sunday, and, after escaping the city by train, wandering out and through the countryside. She loved dusty roads

and houses of wood—not to live in—but to look at for two or three hours a week.

I had heard several versions of the story that she left New York over week-ends, but this I knew to be the true explanation.

Suzanne repeated the statement that she was inherently good.

"But, you know, I had to live, and I had to learn how. I did it pretty well; I suppose it was because I was partly French, and being bad with me was not, as is usual in America, merely being vulgar. But you understand all that—in fact, I think you told me. To go ahead, it was on one of my much-talked-about walks in the country that I met Curtis.

"I was walking along a country road: on one side of me was a field with a springhouse, and, a little beyond it, a stream; on the other side was a farmyard filled with sheep. I was watching the stream and wondering whether or not I could still swim, when I nearly stumbled over a man who was sitting down taking sand out of his shoe. It was Curtis. I went right on, after excusing myself, and didn't think any more about him.

"A little further down the road I went over to the stream, took off my shoes, and dabbled my feet in the water. The place was nearly a hundred yards off the road, and the pool was screened by a grove of young maple trees. I had been there only a few minutes when Curtis appeared. He was terribly fussed, but I knew what to do and what to say, so in ten minutes we were talking easily.

"He didn't know who I was, and I didn't tell him. I was out in the country and I wanted to fit in: to go away from myself.

"So we talked along for some time, and I left him about five o'clock to go back into town. He had told me that he lived in the country to be alone, and I realized that my dream would come true if I could get away. Well, I did get away, and I left him thinking that he had been talking to an angel. It was a kindness on my part, you would understand that. He had appealed to me, almost more than anyone I had ever known, somehow. And then, too, he hadn't fallen in love with me. Most men did—or thought they did—and said so.

"But I went back to the city. I still remembered the boy on the road, and once I looked for him, but he wasn't there that day.

"It must have been three months later that I met him at the stage door and went off with him in a taxi.

"'How did you find me?' I asked.

"'I just happened in town, and went to the theatre.'

"'Isn't it nice? But you didn't know who you were talking to before, did you?'

"'I should say I didn't!'

"He was as shy as a kid, and I saw that he was impressed instead of disillusioned. It rather spoiled my dream, though.

"'Where are you taking me now?' I asked him.

"'To eat and drink.'

"'I thought that you didn't approve of that sort of thing.'

"'I drink some.'

"He was no more sophisticated or at ease with me than a school-boy. I saw my game, and began playing it. You see, he had come into the spider's web, and it was his own fault.

"'But what will people say when they see you with me?' I asked.

"'I don't know.'

"'Do you know what a reputation I have?'

"'No.'

"'I am supposedly the worst girl in that company.'

"'Are you?'

"'Oh, I know how to kiss,' I answered, and laughed.

"We dined and drank champagne. The wine went straight to his head as I had done, and in the taxi, going back, he kissed me."

Suzanne stopped talking while the waiter poured her another cup of coffee.

I lighted a cigarette and remarked encouragingly: "Yes?"

"As you can imagine," she went on, "the result was that he fell in love with my wickedness, and I with his goodness. He liked the things about me that another man in love would have hated. He revelled in stories I told him; he wanted me to dress indecently, and paint my lips red. Can you understand it?"

"Yes," I assented. "As you say, he was in love with your badness."

I leaned back and thought for a moment. The story pleased me like a good wine. My writer's instincts were blooming under it.

"Please go on," I said.

II

"THE day after that evening, for instance," she continued, "he came and apologized for having given me the kiss; but, seeing that I didn't mind, he wanted to talk about it. He wanted me to tell him what other men did. I never understood that, either.

"But, anyway, I grew to care for him. I didn't show it because we were seldom alone, and on big parties I had to act up to my reputation. But I did begin to care. He loved me in a way I had never been loved before; he was younger than most of the men I knew, and he was nice. He had money, and it seemed that his family was travelling in the West, so he was absolutely free."

"Lucky child!"

"But listen: one evening we were going to my apartment in a taxi. Curtis always came as far as the door with me. This time he proposed marriage.

"My first thought was that he was drunk. But I soon saw that, to the contrary, he was rather sober, and very serious. So I told him to come up to talk it over. As soon as we got to the living room, I took him by the lapels of his coat and looked him in the eyes.

"'Now look here, Curtis,' I said, 'you're a young kid, and I like you because you are what you are. But you've got to learn. Why, do you know that a girl could sue you for breach of promise after a thing like that? You want to be careful what you say.'

"'I meant it,' he said. 'I want to marry you.'

"'You don't want to marry me.'

"'I do! I know what I want. I want to marry you.'

"We argued for some time. At last I said:

"'I can't break my contract.'

"'I don't want to make you break it.'

"'You want me to stay in that part?'

"'Yes. Why not?'

"'Oh!'

"'Why not?' he asked again.

"'I don't love you, Curtis.'

"'All that I want is for you to keep on acting the way you have been.'"

Suzanne smiled to herself, and I laughed much too loudly—which I realized, and looked around to see if anyone had noticed.

"So you married him?"

"Yes. I married him."

"I often wondered how it happened."

"We were married in a little country church. I insisted on that, though Curtis much preferred a big affair in the city. Our honeymoon lasted over the week-end. On Monday he came down to the station to see me off. He was coming into town later.

"'Good-bye, dearie, for a little time.'

"He was a little proud of this assimilated love-word.

"'Don't forget to-night.'

"'No. I won't. Don't you forget to telephone.'

"'No.'

"'Good-bye.'

"'Good-bye.'

"We kissed, and as the train took me away I had time to collect my thoughts. In the first place, I realized that our wild honeymoon—we had been half drunk most of the time—had bound him even closer to me. You know, it was such a fool marriage. It wasn't a real marriage, at all, in spite of the license and the minister.

"I had an idea that things might as well break up just where they were; but the prospect of the jewelry and all

that Curtis was giving me kept me to him. Mercenary, I know, but I was living on my own, and when I played a big game like this one I had to toss for high stakes.

"Well, that night Curtis came into town and we went on the same old kind of a wild party that we had been used to: I flirted with most, and drank with the rest. The only difference was that it was more exciting for the other men because I was married, and more boring for me because I knew where the evening would end.

"Curtis was a new man, though. He was a much different person from the one I had picked up on that memorable day in the country. He was sophisticated now, and talked wines, women, and war as though he had been at such parties ever since his fingers were large enough to handle a wine glass. But he was still as light-headed as ever: one cocktail to him was worth three in anyone else.

"I didn't *know* that I cared for him the way I did until I saw one of the other women in the party talking to him in an undertone. She was murmuring about something which was evidently serious to her, though he laughed.

"I leaned over to him and pulled at his sleeve. You know a thing like that will clear my head in a second.

"'Curt,' I said.

"'Go 'way.'

"'Won't you listen?'

"'I'm busy. Can't you see I'm busy.'

"'Well, I'm your wife, and I want you to talk to me.'

"'Run along, dearie; later.'

"So that evening we had our first row on the way home. I was all in the wrong, but in the morning he came and apologized. It was so like him—I mean like the boy I had known in the beginning—that I began to care even more. I was not only his wife, but he treated me at times like a sister.

"The next night we were to go on another party, this one larger than any we had both been on together. As usual, we had cocktails before leaving the apartment. I forgot to tell you, didn't I, that we kept my place in town as well as his country house? That was one of his ideas. Well, this night I suddenly got afraid, and I didn't want to go. Curtis was getting to be too much for me.

"'Let's not go this evening,' I said.

"'What?'

"'Let's not go.'

"'Why not, dearie?'

"'I'm tired.'

"'Tired?'

"'Yes. It isn't any wonder, either.'

"'Of course we won't go, then.'

"'Do you mind?'

"'No. I don't mind. But it would have been good fun.'

"He was keenly disappointed, and I knew it; I knew, too, that I couldn't keep him away from that sort of thing long. He had started fast living and was making up for all the years he had missed. You can see my position, and it was a curious one for a bride, wasn't it? I was beginning to feel that I was living a nightmare. You see, the trouble was that I loved him.

"Well, I finally made up my mind and planned accordingly.

"One night, about two weeks after that, we went into the country again for Saturday and Sunday. I had broken my contract with the manager of the company, and he had been nice about it. But I didn't expect Curtis to see the best side. He was standing at a cabinet examining a bottle when I spoke to him. Remember that this was less than a month after the night he proposed to me.

"'Jack,' I said, 'I have given up my part.'

"'What do you mean?' He didn't move his eyes from the bottle.

"'I mean I resigned—broke my contract.'

"'Why?'

"'Because I am going to have a baby.'

"*Crash!* went the precious stuff all over a new red carpet, and my husband was on his knees beside me."

Suzanne had, by accident, as she was talking, knocked a glass off the table,

and while the waiter was clearing away the splinters, she rested and sipped some water.

"Yes. He kneeled over beside me, and while we remained there in that position, I seemed to feel, well—a sort of revelation. I seemed to see the glory of everything: love, children, the world and its people—I knew that I loved, and I knew that I could never go back again to the existence I had left, the life he had found me in. Those few seconds were beautiful. For the moment I was a sort of God. And in that moment, while I was glorified, my husband was realizing the inadvisability of our having a child. He mentioned it to me, even.

"Anyway, I changed. I had always rouged and painted; now I scarcely powdered. I had always dressed lightly and so thinly that part of my reputation was based on the fact that the tops of my black silk sockings were visible through my gowns; but now I wore what I thought was modest, and becoming to a mother. I stopped drinking, and I stopped telling stories and saying things I wouldn't have wanted my future baby to hear. I didn't go out. All I did was sit by myself, or motor out into the country, or talk to Curtis.

"And Curtis was bored and didn't want to be with me any longer. Whereas he had craved my company every minute in the old days, now he was glad to be away. He didn't recognize in me his former companion.

"I suppose it *was* different. Before, we had always greeted each other with long kisses and things like that when we met after being apart for a few hours. But now, I was so quiet, and—oh—the kisses were different.

"He gradually grew away from me. Little by little he took to spending his evenings in town.

"By the time my baby was born, he was running around with the gayest set in town, a lot of my old 'friends.' He was never sober enough for the idea that he had a family to sink into his head.

"You can see what it must have been for me. One evening he came in about three o'clock . . . then he said he would give me my divorce.

"It was just two weeks later, before the papers had been served, that he asked to talk to me. I was living in his country house, and I thought that it was only right and fair that I let him say what he wanted.

"He came in and I hardly recognized him. He had been in a sanitorium for two weeks.

"We talked. He was sorry, almost broken-hearted.

"'Suzanne,' he said, 'it's all my fault, and now I realize it. We have a baby. It's born of two people, both of whom have played fast and loose, and one of whom is changed. The other wants to change in the same way. Will you let me? If you don't, there's only this same life left for me.'

"'You want to change, Curtis?'

"'Yes.'

"'You think I could go on with you?'

"'If any woman can, you can.'

"'Yes, perhaps.'

"'You are big enough.'

"'Curtis, *can* you change? *Can* you be a father and a husband now? I realize that you married one kind of a woman and had another kind for a wife.'

"He said that he thought he could; but he couldn't, and so he gave me a divorce.

"You still love him?" I said.

"Yes, I do."

"Such is the way of women."

Suzanne smiled absently.

It suddenly struck me that there was rouge on her cheeks and lips, and blue over her eyes. I also noticed—I couldn't help it—that her dress was cut low, far too low for the daytime. I wondered whether she realized how low it was. She must have read my thoughts, for she remarked:

"I'm back again."

"What do you mean: on the stage?"

She nodded.

"The same kind of part?"

She nodded again.

"Why? Do you have to? You must have got a pretty decent alimony."

"I did."

I waited for an explanation, but none came until a week later when I again ran across her in the street. She was looking prettier and faster and smarter than ever, and this time she came up to me.

"Hello, there!"

"Hello, Suzanne. Haven't seen you for some time."

"No? Have you been in town?"

"No."

"Did you sell the story?"

"I didn't write it."

"Why not?"

"Because you never finished it for me."

"Oh!" she laughed.

I didn't care how many people saw me with her that day. She was stunning!—and, anyway, my friends were mostly out of town.

"How are you?" I ventured..

"Well. And you?"

"The same."

We walked on, silent.

"You look like the old Suzanne, all right."

"I am."

We must have gone another block without a word. Finally she said:

"Do you go on wild parties any more?"

"No," I answered.

She gave me a kind glance and took my arm. Her question had reminded me of my own unhappiness, and she understood.

"Why do you ask?" I queried.

"Because I was going to ask you to come with us to-night."

"Who'll be there?"

"Four men," we walked ten steps, "and Curtis."

I saw the situation. We walked the rest of the quiet way arm in arm.

And, when we parted, we were both a bit sad.

THE RIGHT THING

By Frank La Forrest

JONES was not a brilliant man; some would call him stupid. Yet he had one predominant quality. He was never caught napping. No matter what happened—good or bad—he had something to say. He had a comment for everything. He always said, "Damn."

NO woman is hopeless so long as she can laugh at her husband.

HEREDITY

By T. F. Mitchell

HIS great grandfather on one side had translated the Bible into the Polynesian. His grandfather had been a Baptist minister. His father had worked earnestly for Prohibition. His grandfather, on the other side, had converted thousands of happy heathens to Methodism. His aunt had found happiness in many moral crusades. With an ancestry such as this it was inevitable that heredity should show itself. He kept the police of two continents busy.

NOCTURNE

By Jean Allen

UP from the shore,
Across the windy downs,
Night followed us
In trailing robes of thin soft blue.
The croon of the sea was about our ears:
The tang of the wet wind stung our faces:
And the path led over the hill
To the stars.

Between the clasp of your hand and mine,
Lay trust,
As deep as the sky:
And in my heart, Love,
A shining flame,
As steadfast as the island light,
Circling great arms
Towards infinite space.

MARRIAGE is the surest device in the world for proving to a man that he is always wrong.

THE BEANSTALK

(ONE ACT OF A PLAY)

By John Chapin Mosher

As you remember the story, Jack began to climb at once the beanstalk that had grown so suddenly from this world to another. But the story does not tell how Jack, becoming a little tired half-way up the stalk, lay down to rest on a leaf rather broader than the others. The stage where this scene is played is on that leaf, and one may see from the audience still others leading upward and downward in a gigantic green circular stairway, the thick heavy stalk rising rigid through the centre.

As the curtain lifts, Jack comes about the turn of the stalk. He wears a grey and scarlet gherkin, an impudent cap, and carries a staff of heavy oak. He pauses a moment and appraises this resting-place, then peers down around the stalk whence he has come.

JACK

It is a long journey.

(*He peers up the green stalk, pats it affectionately, and speaks to it.*)

How strong you are.—I have a long way yet to go.

(*He throws his staff and cap on the floor-like leaf, squats, and rips a crust from the loaf of bread he has carried in his wallet.*)

I need not hurry. I can eat now.

(*He munches a moment with keen relish. But even here one may not be altogether undisturbed. Jack grows suddenly aware that someone descends the stairway of the beanstalk, and quickly he distinguishes a girl's voice.*)

GIRL (*singing as she comes down*)

I sang a song,
And they laughed at me,
Three hills and a tree,
Five birds and a bee—
They laughed at me.
—I sang the song.

JACK

A girl—here.

(*She comes about the corner, and stands still on seeing Jack. She wears a stiff starched pinafore, and her hair is drawn back from her forehead into two neat braids. Under one arm she carries a huge book, really much too heavy for her. Altogether she is much the sort of person who is not unaccustomed to a civic order of things where fairy godmothers upset the schemes of committees, and dwarfs control, and individuals occasionally drift into naps that last a hundred years. Or, if she does not wholly understand it, as some of our intellectuals have been compelled at last to acknowledge, at least she has grown a little grave in an effort to seek the meaning and the cause and the effect of such conditions.*

Because each understands the significance of their meeting here, neither stirs at once, but they stare silently and even fearlessly—for they are young—at each other. At last Jack speaks.)

JACK

We are half way between the worlds.

THE GIRL

I know.

JACK

And when a boy and a girl meet halfway between the worlds, they love.

THE GIRL (*nodding*)

For that is what love is.

JACK (*rising gallantly*)

Won't you sit down?

THE GIRL (*stepping down on the leaf*)

Thank you. I will.

(*She gladly puts down the book, and sits on it beside him.*)

JACK

I am not surprised somehow to meet you here.

THE GIRL

If I had not thought that I might chance upon you here, I should not have dared to leave my world.

JACK

To dare to leave your world, that is to come half-way to love.

THE GIRL (*suddenly*)

Poor boy, it was harder for you. You had to come up the beanstalk.

JACK (*manfully*)

Pooh—I am not tired.

THE GIRL

Such a long way.

(*They lean over the edge of the leaf and gaze down.*)

JACK

How far away it is. And how small the houses are. I never knew before—I never saw it until from this high distant place—how small a place my own town was, and how wide the world spreads out beyond it.

THE GIRL

That is where you lived?

JACK

There, where the poplar trees give way a little. And there the road winds past the mill. And there's the graveyard; from here it is as level as the square we dance in. That white straight line across the hills is the great highway. Even from here we cannot see its ending.

THE GIRL

But I am content now not to see any further.

JACK

And is your world like that one also?

THE GIRL

We too have squares to dance in, and graveyards and long white highways that lead away across the hills.

JACK (*with a new alarm*)

Surely it cannot be the same as mine.

THE GIRL (*sadly*)

It looks as though it were—but I am quite sure it is not. There is no one like you there.

JACK

Ah no—there is no other world like that. There could not be.

THE GIRL (*suddenly*)

Why did you come away?

JACK

I can run. I can run swifter than any lad on our countryside. And I would run in the morning—outrun them all in the morning. Swift over hills—swift through the bracken—till, there in the breast of the hills where a pool is, I'd stand for an instant, strip bare and then—and then, then as the first rays of dawn hit the water, I'd

dive—deep with the sun's first rays I'd sink, down through that water.

THE GIRL

Yes—yes.

JACK

They did not wish me to run. They wished me to go at dawn to the mill. And at noon, still they would hold me, they would hold me at the mill. But at noon I was far away, where the berries hang red and full on the briars, and the grass grows cool in the shade of forests and woodlands without an end. And at night, though sometimes I danced on the square, I sought rather, yonder, the strange black ways where only the stars will venture to guide, where the gnomes grope forth from their mines in doubt whether flowers that last but a day have a charm their gold has not also.

THE GIRL

And they did not wish to allow you this?

JACK

They told me I must be wise—that I must learn the precepts of the sages, that I must build myself a red-tiled house and toil at day to make the grain grow rich and ripe. They talked so much of what this world is. But do I not know as much as they of this world? Do I not know of the depths of the pool, of the flat purple lilies that grow in the marsh, and the drawings of shadows the evenings make? And their precepts—, why what do they tell of the rain in your face, or the touching of hands in the dance? I was young and they warned me of living. Is to be young a time only to learn to be old in?

THE GIRL (*shaking her head fiercely*)

They did not understand you.

JACK

But you—? Why have you left your country?

THE GIRL

In my book, this book, I wrote my thoughts, the thoughts that stole to me in the night, that creep over the grey hills to me, that the wings of the swallows told me. Oh, it is a great wisdom. But they would not listen to me.

JACK (*in amazement*)

They would not listen to you?

THE GIRL

I went to the councillors, and I stood before their great council tables where they pondered their affairs of state, and I told them the magic of play, and the truths of unbelievable things, of the prayers in children's gestures, and the wisdom in old women's eyes. I told them the love that a soldier has for an enemy's strength, and the nimble way a laughing word could make them friends for ever. I begged them to seek that beauty that huddles beyond palace gates. I told them the gospel of streets and of common troubled people. And I told them the unsaid things in the stories they told themselves.

JACK

History?

THE GIRL

Yes—history. What it was the Sleeping Beauty feared when the Prince wakened her, why it was Cinderella danced best of all her last dance—and the music that each strand of hair played to Rapunzel's lover.

JACK

You must have helped them greatly in their counsels.

THE GIRL

They were too old. They would not listen. And at last I took my book and came away. I could not live in a land where the wise would not listen, and the young might not speak.

JACK

Ah—it is that way in all worlds.

THE GIRL

But I shall make them listen in your world.

JACK (*dubiously*)

How?

THE GIRL

I shall, because of you.

JACK

Me?

THE GIRL

For I have learned why the wings of the swallows beat a tune on the winds for me, and why the night whispered to me. It was for you. It was that I might go to your world, and tell them of you, how wise the waters and the woods had made you—that I might show them what they had not seen—the clearness of your eyes and the precious strength of your hands.

JACK (*leaping up*)

And I see too what I must do. I shall force my way to those grey councillors, and place your book, with the thoughts the night whispered to you, and the swallows' wings beat out on the winds for you, before their old eyes. And they will not dare not to read. They will not dare. For that is why I have been made strong, and why while I was young I came half-way to live.

THE GIRL (*also standing*)

Then we must part now.

(*They are silent before this terrible logic. At last Jack says:*)

JACK

I cannot. I shall go back to my land with you.

THE GIRL

No. When you have met love in the place between two worlds, you may not return to your world.

(*This is so very obvious to them that they do not question it, but after another moment's silence Jack stoops and picks up the book. As he does so, he notices the rim of the leaf.*)

JACK

There are clouds in the West, but still the sun scorches the vine. See, the leaf has a yellow edge.

THE GIRL

You must climb slowly, and not let the sun beat too hot upon you.

JACK

I am glad that the leaves of the vine will shade you. See, they droop a little, and they will fan you gently as you go down.

THE GIRL

Then we shall meet—?

JACK

Yes—when the councillors have read your book, and brought a new happiness to your world,—

THE GIRL

And when your world begs that you return and run again across their hills—

JACK

We shall come here again.

THE GIRL

To this place between two worlds.

JACK

For that we are strong, we live, and our journeys are not overlong.

THE GIRL

And if I am late, will you wait me?

JACK

Could I do otherwise here? And will your journey up be overwearying?

THE GIRL

Ah, no, for I shall be on my way to you.

(*Very solemnly Jack bends to her and kisses her once on the lips. Then he seizes her book, and hands her his staff. They stand a moment in parting, silent. Then the girl turns to the downward step of the stairway of leaves. She waves him her last farewell, and disappears about the stalk. As she descends she sings.*)

THE GIRL (*singing*)

I sang a song—
And they laughed at me,
Three hills and a tree,
Five birds and a bee,
They laughed at me.
I sang the song—
Oh—I sang the song.

JACK (*jubilantly*)

"I sang the song"—

(*He catches the book firmly under his arm and turns to climb. As he does so, he pauses a moment to run his hand caressingly about the great stalk, suddenly stopping short.*)

That was not there before, that rifting in the stalk.

(*He looks out over the sky.*)

Those clouds move swiftly toward the sun.

(*From far below the girl's voice comes up to him.*)

THE GIRL

I sang the song—

JACK

What have I to fear now?—"I sang the song"—

(*He takes the first step of the leaves with a vault and runs up the stairway gaily, balancing the book on his shoulder. But the clouds were moving more swiftly than he thought, and a darkness spreads all at once about the vine, and the heavy stalk trembles in the storm. Sounding still clearly through the darkness come the voices of the boy and the girl.*)

JACK (*from above*)

Sing, little girl, sing.

THE GIRL (*from below*)

I am singing—singing all the way.

JACK

Only a little while, and then it will be light again.

THE GIRL

I can hear you, boy. Down here I can hear you.

JACK

And your song comes even here to me.

THE GIRL (*at last*)

I have reached your world, my boy. Where are you now?

JACK (*a moment later*)

Your song gave me a new swiftness—it has brought me, too, to your world.

THE GIRL

Only a little while—.

JACK

Yes—only a little while, and then we shall come back again.

(*A great gust of wind drowns their voices, then passes, carrying with it the storm clouds. Again there is light. But the storm has worked its will, and through the very centre a great rift cuts in half the beanstalk.*)

ALL women have a secret hope that people regard them as just a bit dangerous.

A FRIEND is an acquaintance who is on the way to being an enemy.

SEEING THINGS

By John Temple

I REALLY must be suffering from hallucinations. When I started dancing with Florence I noticed that she had on white kid slippers. Of this fact I am positive. Yet when the music stopped and I happened to glance to the floor I could hardly believe my eyes. The slippers were a sort of peculiar mottled black!

ON WINTER NIGHTS

By John McClure

ON winter nights when snow-flakes fall
So quietly without,
And the dim embers on the hearth
Call, and dreams crowd about,

Then I take refuge from the snow
In books of balladry
And dream the dreams that long ago
Old poets dreamt for me,

Turning the musty leaves to scan—
Long dead the makers quaint thereof!—
Those courtly sonnets Italian
And madrigals of love.

On all snow-haunted winter nights
I dawdle until dawn
O'er tales of tourneys and of knights
And ladies love-begone.

AUNT IDA

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

ANDREW HUNNYWELL entered into matrimony with a complexity of emotions—the usual doubts and misgivings that assail the about-to-be-benedick plus a certain fear and distrust of the bride herself. He knew that marriage was a most serious step, under any circumstance to be pondered and weighed.

Usually, too, Andrew considered with a nice thoughtfulness each move that he took. Yet he married Ethyl Apperson. No wonder he felt he didn't understand even himself. No wonder the event thrilled him while it frightened—held out delightful possibilities of unknown dangers.

Ethyl Apperson was a New Yorker. Not one of the usual, five-years-out-of-the-West sort, Andrew was that kind himself. Ethyl had been born in New York City. It seemed unbelievable. Until made aware of that fact, Andrew had taken it for granted that New Yorkers were added to the city by birth only on the East Side. The New York that Andrew knew personally was populated by others like himself; the ambitious, unappreciated, misunderstood youth of the little towns. There was something to be distrusted, suspected, about the native New Yorker.

Andrew had been brought up with a distrust for all city folks. He had read stories and heard stories about "city slickers" and he had believed nearly all of them. The city was a synonym for wickedness. The villain was always a city man. The scarlet woman was always a product and inhabitant of the city. Although he knew that evil women and crime did exist in Piedmont, Missouri, the town he admitted having honoured by his birth, he felt that the crimes of Piedmont were moderate, decent, rural ones. Besides, they were always committed by people outside of his immediate social circle.

Andrew had been brought up in a decent Christian home. His father might come to table in his shirt sleeves, ornamented with red-covered rubber sleeve bands, but his mother, clad in a neat and above-suspicion two year old hat always went to church on Sunday morning. He was raised to regard the Saturday night bath as far more of a reality than material for rude humour. He didn't like Sunday-school, but it never occurred to him that he might rebel against it or omit learning his Sunday-school lesson on Saturday night, while the bath water was getting hot in two kettles on the kitchen range.

Andrew's older sister, Nellie, married Douglas Splicer (whose father was partner in the lumber mill), the year ambition moved Andrew cityward. The year before, his older brother, Sefton, had married Minnie Pelly, who had lived next door to the Hunnywells for ten years. The Hunnywells were solid citizens.

In New York Andrew got a job with a wholesale silk company. He was affable and neat. After a few years of metropolitan polish and learning of silk business jargon he became a competent salesman, which carried with it what Andrew thought quite a decent salary.

Socially, too, Andrew was well satisfied. On coming to New York, feeling the need of a helping hand, he had attended—once or twice—the church that his family had gone to at home. Then, realizing that the city church

was not a social mentor and that, without his mother, he could sleep late Sunday mornings, he stopped going.

Next, he looked up some former Piedmont people but found that they had settled into an uninteresting, decently Piedmont routine of living. That was not what he had come to New York in search of. After a little while he found his own circle, gay young blades from Akron, Piqua, Jefferson City and points west, all bent now, as he was, on "making good."

He met girls, too, a musical student from Monticello, Indiana; a teacher from Cascade, Wisconsin, taking a post-graduate course in pedagogy at Columbia University; a trained nurse from Livingston, Tennessee. He even met a chorus girl who had gone to school with Fred Millway in Tenaboya, Alabama, and an illustrator from Ashtabula, Ohio. In groups they went to the theatre, descending from the topmost row of the gallery as their salaries advanced, substituting for the glass of soda at a Liggett drug store a "bite to eat" at a jazz cabaret. If Andrew attended the theatre and cafés usually visited by out-of-towners, biennial vacationists, buyers and the like, he didn't realize it. He wouldn't have cared if he had. He felt he was "seeing life." He was a real New Yorker, the best kind.

There were other New Yorkers, of course—wicked ones, the ones that made decent, God-fearing folks shudder, the sort his mother and father and Sefton and Nellie had warned him against,—the born New Yorkers.

So, from the first, Andrew knew the kind of girl Ethyl Apperson was. His up-bringing warned him. His Piedmont principles of decency cried out. She fascinated him—that was it. He should have fought against her. Yet, from the first, the web she wove proved too strong.

II

ANDREW never even really "met" Ethyl in approved Piedmont fashion. No one ever brought her forward, blushing hopefully, and muttered the cabalistic Piedmont formula, "Mr. Hunnywell, meet my friend, Miss Ethyl Apperson," at which Andrew and Ethyl should have completed the ceremony with a pert and respective, "I'm pleased to meet you," and "How dee do."

No. Ethyl came as a stenographer to Bernheim, Orlindorfer and O'Brien, Silks. She came unheralded, one Monday in September. She looked wicked, seductive, even at first glance—a tall girl with bright brown eyes and light hair and a way of looking at you that suggested half a wink. The third day there, Ethyl offered Andrew some chocolates and teased him about his tie.

Andrew should have kept away from her from that moment. He knew that. Three days later, Ethyl confided to him that she'd been born in New York and had never been farther away than Atlantic City.

Although the fact seemed unbelievable, it immediately placed Ethyl in the "other" class of New Yorkers. He knew she was a girl of no principles and with only a desire to lure men on. She had been graduated from a New York high school, which was about as far, educationally, as most of the girls he knew had gone. She had "completed" her education at a business college. But even the most alluring of city types need not be wholly without learning.

Ethyl wore clothes far beyond her means, Andrew knew, and fresh flowers, even. He was accustomed to girls who dressed nicely and had felt that the girls he went with had style—but, well, Ethyl was different. The way she spelled her name for one thing—so sophisticated. And the way she'd pull her powder puff out of her purse, any time, and apply powder to her always-too-white nose, or, pursing her mouth into a peculiar formation, apply a lip stick conscientiously, asking of anyone who happened to be around, "Did I get it on straight?" and then smoothing her lip with a glitteringly

manicured little finger. She had a smile and side glance for every man in the office. What would Minnie and Nellie think of her?

Andrew found himself strangely under the spell of Ethyl. He squirmed, agreeably, under her charms. He found himself watching for her coming in the morning—she was always late—trying to get a word with her whenever he could, during the day. He couldn't break away. Her thin white hands, her too-red lips, her pert manners bewitched him. The other girls he knew in New York—New Yorkers now, but small town girls first—ceased to interest him. He could think only of Ethyl. He was as madly in love as a neat, decent little fellow of his type could be—and with a New Yorker named Ethyl. He was amazed at his own boldness.

Finally, he asked if he might call. He felt that this would be a test—would disillusion him. He'd see the kind of a home Ethyl came from—the spell would be broken.

"Oh, don't come out to the house," Ethyl said, "not to-night, anyhow. Aunt Mary and the three kids are there. Their apartment is being redecorated and the smell of paint makes Aunt Mary ill. I'll tell you, let's have dinner some place down here and go to the movies."

So—she was ashamed of her home—or not prepared yet that he might see it. Well, he knew that much, anyhow.

That evening was the pleasantest Andrew had ever spent. The little French restaurant Ethyl suggested—she knew dozens just like it all over town—seemed mysterious, different. The motion picture theatre seemed made just for the two of them. He loved the music, that night. The presence of Ethyl, the fragrance of her—he'd never had such an opportunity to smell the perfume she used as in that semi-dark warm theatre—her little laughs, made him half dizzy. He reached over for her thin white hand and found it soft and very yielding. She didn't pull away, with a joke, as other girls he knew would have done. It was quite wonderful. Afterward, they went for a "bite to eat." Ethyl chose rather a quiet restaurant and said she "had to hurry home or her mother'd worry." She was a deep one, was Ethyl.

The outside of Ethyl's apartment house told him nothing. It was in a respectable section of Harlem, a six story building of red brick, ornamented with the usual white stone, the usual skeleton of fire escapes, the regulation vulgarly ornate entrance hall. Ethyl held out a slim white hand at the door of the elevator.

"Had a fine time, see you to-morrow," she said, as the elevator boy, a huge negro in a uniform several sizes too small for him, opened the door.

"That elevator man, bet he knows a thing or two he could tell me about Ethyl," thought Andrew on his way home.

He had an engagement with a couple of "the fellows" the next night. The night after, he took Ethyl to dinner at one of the better hotels and then to a musical comedy. She had to go home immediately afterward.

"Some friends of Mama's are there for the evening and I promised to get home in time for supper," she told him.

But, when they reached her apartment house, the slouching negro, the yawning elevator, she dismissed him again with a wave of her hand and a "See you to-morrow." Could it be possible that Ethyl was leading a double life?

She seemed all right, of course, worked hard, was a good stenographer. Andrew knew that. And yet—of course, she spoke of her family, little things—her mother had been to a card party, some relatives had been there for dinner, her father had been over in New Jersey for a week-end of shooting with some friends from the place where he was employed. It didn't seem quite right. Andrew's father didn't go shooting, his mother didn't play cards. He'd

never seen one of Ethyl's family, even.

As the days passed, Andrew grew more fascinated, if possible. He continued asking Ethyl to go places with him and she nearly always accepted. Once in a while, "a boy I used to go to school with" or "an old friend" had made a previous engagement. The day after these engagements, Ethyl sometimes came to the office wearing a corsage of violets. Once, there was even a solitary orchid in the centre.

Andrew suggested that he call on Ethyl at her home. She always had an excuse—relatives would be there and would tease them, her father wasn't feeling well, he wouldn't have a good time—why not stay down-town?

One night, after they had dined together, Ethyl suggested that they go to see "There You Go Again," one of the newest musical comedies. Andrew consented readily. At the theatre Ethyl looked around, searching for someone.

"There she is," she said at last.

"Who?" asked Andrew.

"Mama. She said she'd be here. See, look up there, the second row in the balcony. See, she's waving."

So Andrew got the first view of his future mother-in-law. His heart sank, though it was no worse than he had expected. She was a large woman, with light hair arranged in an elaborate coiffure. Her dress was dark but it was rounded at the neck and was tight over an ample bosom. She was with a woman in bright blue and two middle-class men.

"Which is your father?" asked Andrew.

"Oh, neither one of those," Ethyl answered. "Papa hates theatres. You can't drag him inside. That's Mama's cousin, Mrs. Brooks, and her husband and her husband's brother. Mama goes with them quite a lot. Mrs. Brooks has a son just my age—maybe you've heard me speak of cousin Bert?"

It was even worse than Andrew had pictured it—Ethyl a born New Yorker, whose mother undoubtedly peroxided her hair and who went to the theatre with a man other than her husband. Imagine a respectable matron of Piedmont, the mother of grown children, going to the theatre with another man! And yet Ethyl was sweet and soft and fragrant—and, yes, Andrew even admitted it, her wickedness, her urbanity, reinforced her other charms.

Andrew didn't want to get married. He had a comfortable but small apartment in Madison Avenue, which he called his "rooms." Before he met Ethyl he had spent pleasant evenings with a few of the men he knew, a simple dinner, a vaudeville or a music show, or just talking in some café or in the "rooms" of a member of the group, or he had gone to odd parties. He even knew an artist or two and several people who lived in Greenwich Village. He took a girl or two to dinner or the theatre. He went to queer basement restaurants, calling the dirt and unpleasantness "atmosphere," or to queer, half-furnished "studios," sitting around until long past his usual bed time, drinking weak tea or arguing over books he hadn't read or things he only half understood, and calling it "Bohemia."

Andrew was well satisfied with himself. He didn't want to get married. Yet, one night, of his own free will, he proposed marriage to Ethyl Apperson and Ethyl accepted him.

He didn't know exactly what brought on the proposal. It might have been a frequency of engagements Ethyl had had with other men, "A boy I went to school with" or "Mr. Jackson, who was at Helmar Jones and Company with me, an awfully nice fellow" or "a boy who lived in our apartment building when I was a kid, he's a young lawyer now and awfully smart."

It might have been because Ethyl was Ethyl, sweet and fragrant and alluring, with a background of city wickedness and city knowledge. Why, you couldn't tell what kind of life Ethyl had led or what she might do. Maybe, even now, she was just leading him on—with Ethyl things would

be mysterious, attractive, fascinating—Ethyl, born in New York, a wicked city girl. . . .

III

THE day after Ethyl accepted his proposal—it had occurred, most fittingly, in one of New York's gayest restaurants, with an accompaniment of jazz and a half-dressed girl in pink singing "What Are You Going To Do About That?"—she met him in one of the corridors of Bernheim, Orlindorfer and O'Brien and said,

"Andrew, just think, we're engaged and you've never met any of my folks. I hinted to Mama how things were and she says you're to come in Sunday for dinner and meet the family."

Andrew nodded. He had insisted, the night before, that they marry immediately—in a day or two, in fact. He found he couldn't get his mind on his work when Ethyl was there in the office. He didn't even care whether Mr. J. Ames, of the Ames Store, Canterbury, Conn., ordered silk or not, when any minute he might see Ethyl, fresh, fluffy, passing by an open door. Ethyl wouldn't work when they were married—he had money enough for that. And Ethyl—what if she changed her mind about marrying him? It didn't seem possible that such a seductive, bewitching city girl would be willing to marry an ordinary fellow like him.

Once married, though, he felt he could breathe easier. He could manage her. He looked forward to it—to toning down her city ways—her wickedness, though he didn't know the form her wickedness or his instruction might take.

That Sunday of meeting Ethyl's people always remained a sort of a hazy nightmare to Andrew. He never quite remembered what happened. Ethyl, in a new white dress, met him at the door. Immediately he seemed surrounded by a pack, all barking at once. These gradually resolved themselves into people, Ethyl's people, her mother, blonde and rather fat, with a ready laugh, over-dressed, red-cheeked, rather loud; her father, a tall, sallow man, nearly bald, who spoke little; half a dozen cousins, three or four aunts, an assortment of odd relatives. There was much laughter and talk, good natured teasing of him and Ethyl, a taking for granted, a natural acceptance of Ethyl's "affair," pleasantries, then a dining table set with quantities of delicatessen.

He got away, finally. Ethyl went to the door with him and, looking around to be sure no one was there, he kissed her.

"Did the folks frighten you?" she asked. "I guess it seems pretty bad, meeting them this way, but you won't get them all at once, like this, very often. You see, Mama has four sisters and they all have children and Dad has two brothers here in New York. You'll like them when you get used to them. We have lots of fun."

Andrew felt vaguely disturbed about the relatives, though he was too much in love with Ethyl to take them seriously. They did not fit in with his idea of Ethyl, however. There was nothing alluring, wicked, about them. To be sure, a few of the girl cousins were as slim and almost as fair as Ethyl herself, with the distinguishing mark of the "city girl." One of them looked every inch a screen vampire though she talked with a lisp, Andrew noticed. Still—so many respectable looking relatives . . . Oh, well, he wasn't going to marry the family, that was certain. The next day at the office Ethyl seemed as bewitching, as alluring as ever.

A few days afterwards they were married. Andrew lay awake the night before his marriage, thinking of it. He was going to marry Ethyl! Ethyl! A city girl—with a past, like as not—with charming little ways of holding her head, of flirting, of looking out of the corners of her eyes—Ethyl!

They were married in church. Ethyl's people had a favourite denomination, it seemed, though of course, they never attended services. Although it was not the same church Andrew had attended

in Piedmont and though marrying a girl like Ethyl in a church seemed doubly wicked, Andrew was glad to write his people about it—he would keep them from finding out the truth, shield them. He would pretend that Ethyl was the sort of a girl his mother or Minnie or Nellie might know.

Only Ethyl's parents were at the marriage ceremony—Andrew had requested that. Ethyl wore a new suit, a charming suit, Andrew thought. Her mother wore black, elaborately braided and trimmed in red and black beads, her father a suit of peculiarly ugly purple blue. Well, he was married to Ethyl at last!

At first, they went to live in two rooms in a small hotel near where Ethyl's parents lived—less trouble than housekeeping—just the two of them—so near the folks, too. The hotel was the Clifton, middle class, not especially well arranged or managed or furnished, with a small basement café. Ethyl had suggested this.

The first weeks of matrimony were quite as pleasant as Andrew had anticipated, though perhaps a bit more moderate. Ethyl was sweet and loving and fragrant. Andrew thought she succeeded in hiding her evil ways quite well, and, though he looked for symptoms of badness, he admitted to himself that Ethyl acted quite the part of the model bride.

Andrew liked the Clifton, too, until meeting an old acquaintance a few weeks later and telling him of his marriage and where he was living, the acquaintance had raised eyebrows.

"Rather a shady reputation, the Clifton," he said. "Did you know that?"

"Indeed I didn't. We'll leave there at once, of course," Andrew had answered, but he had been secretly thrilled at the thought of having lived in a hotel of doubtful reputation. Of course Ethyl had known about the Clifton. Born in New York, there were a lot of things she knew. . . .

Andrew questioned her about the hotel that evening.

"Nonsense," she said, "I've known about this place all my life. Why, Jack Wilson, the boy I used to go with before I met you—I went to high school with him, remember I told you—has lived here for years. A lot of other people I know, too."

Jack Wilson—was that why Ethyl had picked out the Clifton?

"Ethyl," he said, sternly, "you haven't seen Jack lately, have you?"

Ethyl giggled. "You silly thing, of course not. Don't make such big eyes at me, wolf, or I'll think you're trying to eat me."

But Andrew continued to be serious.

"Ethyl," he said, "I'm not going to dwell on this. But, if I ever doubt you, it's all off. You know what I mean. We—we couldn't remain together—if I—I suspected you. Of course I—I trust you. I just wanted you to know."

Ethyl tweaked his hair.

"Don't take it so hard," she said, and giggled again. "You bet it would be 'all off,' if you doubted me. The one thing I couldn't stand would be a husband who snooped or was suspicious. One suspicion—and—out you go."

She made a pretty little gesture of throwing him out of the door.

Andrew didn't say anything else. He didn't tell Ethyl he doubted her, but he began watching her actions a little closer. After all, born in New York City, living there all your life without the influences of a small town—Ethyl seemed innocent enough, now, but the corrupting influences to which she had been subjected—the way she had been raised—

They must leave the Clifton, that was certain. That would be a good first step to take. Andrew was sorry his "rooms" were not available, but they were just for bachelors. And, too, in passing them he had seen that the small swinging "For Rent" sign had been taken down.

Ethyl and he went house-hunting then. They finally found a small apartment near Ethyl's mother and her other relatives—not far from the Clifton—it was the part of New York Ethyl

liked, she'd be lonely in any other part, she said. The apartment seemed quite comfortable to Andrew. There were five rooms, a living room of fair size, a dining-room with a great cluster of lights above where the table would come, two small bedrooms, a kitchen wearing a new coat of white paint and a neat bath.

"Just think how lucky we are, dear," Ethyl said, "one of Papa's brothers is with a wholesale furniture company and we can get everything at wholesale prices."

So their shopping did not prove as pleasantly romantic as Andrew had hoped. Somehow, he had dreamed of hunting through funny little shops for things. No, with the money Ethyl's parents gave her, with some Ethyl had saved for this very purpose and with his contribution, they had just enough to buy the things Ethyl desired, a big three-piece over-stuffed "set" for the living room, covered with green and rose imitation tapestry, a dining-room set of six chairs with shiny black leather seats, a glassed china closet, an enormous buffet and a set of ivory enamelled furniture for one bedroom and a four poster bed and "colonial highboy" in mahogany for the other.

There were bright coloured rugs, too, and Ethyl bought yards of flowered chintz for curtains. Although he felt that something was lacking, when the furniture was in and the curtains up, Andrew had to admit that things looked mighty bright and cozy. He was quite well satisfied and enjoyed his little home until he met Daisy Mallory, one of the Greenwich Village artists he had known before his marriage.

He met her at a small tea shop where he lunched, occasionally.

"Don't tell me you're married," she gurgled. And, when he did tell her, she asked innumerable questions and finally asked about his apartment.

"We've got a mighty pretty little place," he boasted. "My wife's got good taste about things, a New York girl, you know, and her uncle's a member of a large wholesale furniture house, so we got things at cost. Mighty good looking, too."

"Not—*commercial* stuff!" Miss Mallory gave a little shriek.

"Well, we paid for it, if that's commercial," Andrew laughed comfortably.

"Oh, dear," said Miss Mallory, "do tell me about it."

Andrew told her a little, mentioning the overstuffed "set," of which Ethyl was so proud, the dining-room "set," the bedroom things.

"How funny," laughed Miss Mallory, not at all politely, "Oh, you funny boy. You don't mind my laughing, do you, Andrew? Of course, in a year or two, you'll outgrow it and furnish again—but—a rocking chair—an overstuffed rocking chair—and two complete bedroom sets—and a table with a pedestal and six leather-covered chairs—what a charming place you might have had, picking up odd things at auction—good reproductions, even, a carved chest of drawers, an odd table, some painted things, a vase or two in lustre, some good-looking polychrome candlesticks—oh, well, you're young, you'll learn."

But the conversation left Andrew depressed. He hadn't guessed that his apartment was so dreadfully ugly or middle class. Ethyl—with her siren smiles and alluring red mouth shouldn't have had commonplace desires for "sets" and imitation tapestry—why, she should have had chiffon draperies—like some he'd seen in a studio, once, in Chelsea Village—and, why, a tiger skin, of course.

On the whole, though, Andrew was quite happy, the first year of his marriage, though it was not just what he had expected. There were no wild moments, no dark suspicions, no tantalizing fears. Life became smooth, uneventful. Ethyl would meet him at the office for dinner, always charmingly dressed, smiling. He didn't like the way she flirted with a new salesman named Brown and he watched her rather closely while she was there, but, outside of that—

They'd go to a favourite restaurant

for dinner, then, or the theatre, but as Andrew found that it cost a good deal more than twice as much to support one than two, there was not much money for luxuries.

Other nights, they were invited to dinners or parties given by relatives or friends of Ethyl, stupid parties, usually, with poorly prepared food, too many people who laughed at nothing and all spoke at once, dancing, a talking machine that ground out endless songs. Some evenings they spent at home, reading or talking, though, when someone didn't drop in, Ethyl fell asleep along about eight.

Ethyl was not a good cook. She had been busy down town before marriage, and her mother, who didn't like to cook either, had said "Ethyl will learn like we all do, when the time comes." So Ethyl was learning now, using Andrew's money for experiments and the results were not all he hoped for.

But Ethyl was still soft and cozy and fragrant, though Andrew was not as thrilled over the perfume she used as he had been. It was expensive, for one thing, and, for another, she used too much of it. Her nightgowns always smelled of it and so did her hair and even the rooms.

But the worst thing about being married was Ethyl's relatives. Andrew rather liked Ethyl's mother when he grew used to her, though she always talked too loud, used too much perfume of a grade inferior to that used by her daughter, and insisted on calling him "son." She went with them, occasionally, to the theatre and laughed so heartily at the jokes that people turned around to look at her. And, too, she had an annoying manner of putting her arm around him, with heavy affection.

Ethyl's father was the least objectional relative Ethyl had. He used cheap tobacco and would smoke only his own, leaving the apartment reeking with it hours after his departure. But aside from that he was inoffensive, talking little, though he breathed rather heavily and had an habitual cough.

The other relatives—Andrew shuddered when he thought of them. They would troop in at all hours when they were least expected or wanted—pretty cousins with languid or affectionate suitors, for tea on Sunday afternoons, aunts dropping in for dinner, uncles coming over on Sunday mornings to borrow things. Ethyl's Aunt Mary was a disagreeable woman with a pert way of making decisions—but Andrew's abomination was Aunt Ida.

Aunt Ida was a widow, who lived alone with one son, Joe, a fat, lazy fellow, Andrew thought him. Aunt Ida's most unpleasant characteristic, to Andrew, was a habit of asking questions. She'd ask questions about anything, everything, sometimes going on with another question without waiting for an answer, sometimes repeating her question, two or three times, each time in a shriller, more impatient voice.

Aunt Ida, too, would handle things, nervously, picking up the books on the living room table, little packages belonging to someone else, small ornaments. She would finger things, put them back, take them up again. She wore, always, several bead chains that clinked together unpleasantly when she moved or shrugged her shoulders, which she did frequently, or when she fingered them, which she did nearly always when she had nothing else in her hands. Altogether, Andrew found Aunt Ida impossible.

Andrew spoke to Ethyl about her relatives, especially about Aunt Ida. Ethyl sulked a little, but promised to "see about it." After all, she pointed out, she couldn't tell her own people not to come to see her, could she?

IV

As time passed, Andrew found life growing more and more unpleasant. Disillusion came fast. Instead of the wicked person he had surmised, even perhaps hoped Ethyl to be, she settled down into commonplace mediocrity. She was heavy, stupid, dull, unimaginative. Of course—sometimes Andrew thought that the real Ethyl was far

different, that she was really all he had hoped her, that this was just a pose—but there were few evidences of it as the days passed.

Ethyl bought her clothes wholesale, through one of her innumerable relatives, getting them at splendid bargains, but quite robbing shopping of its charms. She always looked well when she was out with Andrew, well groomed, "citified." But, in the house, to save her clothes, she took to wearing rather disreputable kimonos and house gowns, cotton things of no particular charm. She did her cooking in these, which were always too long and the hems were always dirty where they swept the floors. Her perfume, too, became more annoying and the one odour, formerly so fragrant, became cloyingly unpleasant and Andrew finally had to ask her not to use any perfume at all.

With relatives coming in to dinner or afterwards, "parties" he could not avoid without a quarrel, calls he was forced to make, occasionally attending the theatre or having dinner down town, Andrew found himself in the centre of a web of thickset middle-class respectability, dull, uninspired. When he was first married, he feared that his mother or Minnie or Nellie would have disapproved of his city wife. He was quite sure that they would disapprove now, not because his wife was the siren he had at first feared her, but because she was untidy, lazy, a poor housekeeper, shiftless.

Sometimes, Andrew would meet some of his old friends. To them he soon learned to give a tinted version of his romance. He did not dare admit the mediocrity into which he had sunk, a "little couple" in the midst of decent, middle-class, stupid, stifling relatives. If, by chance, his friends met Ethyl, well-groomed, flirty, laughing, they were able to believe easily Andrew's tales of excitement, happiness. But Andrew knew that his friends were living far more of a wild "city" life than he was. They had more money for one thing—Ethyl was not economical.

Then, too, Ethyl no longer enjoyed the things he did. The cafés that were the loudest and fullest of colour, that Andrew regarded as "the life," Ethyl began to think rather stupid. She could see nothing in the second-class vaudeville acts that formed the features of the cabarets. She had been a vaudeville attendant since she was ten and the acts seemed to her, now, to lack interest and novelty.

If he had remained single, Andrew thought that he still might have been a part of real city life as he saw it. Gay Bohemian parties might still have been open to him. They were now—if he could go to them. He tried taking Ethyl to a few, but she called the studios "dirty holes" and didn't get on well with the women, saying they were silly and affected and finally refusing to go altogether. With Andrew's Piedmont principles of how a young husband ought to act he did not think of going without her. Andrew knew that the life he was leading—getting up as late as possible to the ringing of an alarm clock, a hurried bath and a shave, a bite of poorly prepared breakfast, a day in the silk district, home to a poorly prepared dinner, with maybe a relative dropping in in the evening—was exactly the same life he might have led in Piedmont—any place.

Finally Andrew rebelled against one thing. His nerves were beginning to get on edge and he didn't sleep well at night. He wanted quiet, he said, and peace, while he was at home. Ethyl must keep her relatives away!

Ethyl sulked and cried but finally promised to try. A few cousins disappeared, an aunt or so. But at no time were Ethyl and Andrew free from unexpected visits. Aunt Ida was perhaps the worst one. With only one son to look after, she had a great deal of time to herself. It was only natural she'd drop in to see her favourite niece, bringing a jar of home-made jelly, a home-baked cake—Aunt Ida had more domestic talents than her sisters—and then stay to dinner so as to see Andrew. Then, unless fat, slow-witted Joe called for her, Andrew would be compelled

to escort her home, "just a step, you know," five long city blocks—and Aunt Ida usually chose a rainy day for her visits.

"Listen here," said Andrew one evening after he returned from Aunt Ida's, "this has got to stop. I've stood for a lot. I won't stand for this any more. You get me—I never want to see Aunt Ida again—or hear her name! Cry if you want to. That's my last word."

Ethyl did cry, but she didn't know what to do about it. She had never seen Andrew quite so angry. Raised in the midst of her people, she thought it rather pleasant to have so many aunts and cousins, to be one of such a jolly circle. But, in a vague way, she saw Andrew's point of view. The next day she spoke to her mother about it.

"Men are funny creatures," offered her mother, with the wisdom of twenty-five years of married life. "You've got to humour them. I hate to hurt Ida's feelings—she's a good soul, though she is kind of fidgety. You leave it to me. I'll tell Ida that Andrew ain't well, that she'd better not go to see you, while he's home, for a while. Then, if she don't come in while he's home he'll be all right. You can be careful not to mention her name to him. Men are queer about likes and dislikes. You can go to see Ida once in a while, in the daytime. That'll keep her from feeling bad and straighten things out."

So—Aunt Ida was blotted out of the life of Andrew. He never saw her again. Ethyl, in her little recountings of daily activities, saw that they were free from the mention of this despised relative.

V

THINGS should have gone smoothly, Aunt Ida out of the way, but they didn't. Andrew grew cranky over trifles. Life was not shaping itself as he had hoped. Once more, he started suspecting Ethyl of small deceits, asking questions which he thought skilful, to ferret out her actions of the day. When he found that Ethyl's life was quite above suspicion, he grew more and more annoyed.

He wasn't saving money, though he had had several raises. This worried him. Ethyl's cooking did not improve, her gravies had a layer of grease on the top of them, her biscuits were heavy and tasted of baking powder, she preferred small packages of delicatessen meats and salads to the big roasts and joints that had been the pièces de résistance of his mother's meals in Piedmont.

Ethyl's conversation, too, grew more stupid, tiresome. It was wholly taken up with telling what had happened during the day, the old friend she had met on Fifth Avenue, what Cousin Helen had bought for the new baby. This—was this life?

Andrew grew a bit pale. He grew more and more suspicious, though he knew too well how groundless his suspicions were. He got to leaving the silk company half an hour before his usual time in order to call for Ethyl at the place where she had said she was going to spend the afternoon, a friend's or a cousin's or the matinée. That he nearly always met her or that Ethyl always produced a plausible alibi only made Andrew a little more sullen.

Ethyl, too, was a bit disappointed in the joys of matrimony. Before marriage, Andrew had seemed so jolly and friendly. She had thought that marriage would mean a good time and adding a pleasant husband to the little gatherings of the clan, like Cousin Ruth's husband, Billy. Why, Billy could play the violin—even rag on it—he was the life of the party when they all met on Sunday afternoons or Saturday nights. They were all awfully fond of him. Andrew—why Andrew was ridiculous. It was all right, a couple going only with each other before marriage, but now—why, more and more, Andrew was trying to take her away from her own people. His friends—stupid folks from small towns, who thought New York a kind of a circus!

But, Ethyl resented most of all Andrew's attitude towards her Aunt Ida. It seemed so narrow, childish, obstin-

ate. Aunt Ida's son, Joe, went to Denver on business and Aunt Ida, all alone, gave up her apartment and moved to the Clifton, where, in two tiny rooms and bath, she was near her many relatives and quite comfortable.

Now—if Andrew was only sensible, Aunt Ida could have come in for a meal with them, occasionally, as she did with the rest of the folks. Not often—not more than once a week or so. Living in a hotel is lonely. Of course, Aunt Ida had the rest of the family—but Ethyl disliked being the one member who could not invite her. It made her seem apart, different. So she got into the habit of dropping into the Clifton, when she knew Aunt Ida would be at home, talking to her, spending perhaps an hour. She liked seeing Aunt Ida, partly out of family fondness, partly because she felt that she was doing something Andrew objected to.

Ethyl dropped in to the Clifton to see Aunt Ida one Thursday afternoon on her way home from a bridge party. Her dinner was to be picked up at the delicatessen store on her way home, so she didn't have to hurry about that—she hated cooking. Aunt Ida was at home and they had a pleasant little talk about the Carlson babies, who were getting over the mumps, about Jennie's engagement to a naval lieutenant, about the dinner Mary had given for Birdie Rogers. She kissed Aunt Ida goodbye quite warmly as she left, making no reference to Andrew's taste in the matter of disliking in-laws. Then she tripped out—a very successful little visit.

In the lobby of the hotel, Ethyl met Jack Wilson, who was just coming in. She had known Jack for years and thought him a fine fellow, always jolly and polite. They talked for a few minutes, standing near the desk as Jack asked for his mail.

"Which way you going?" asked Jack.

"I'm going right home. I'm late as anything, now."

"You won't mind if I walk home with you? Too nice to go up to my room, weather like this."

"A block or two, not more than that. I've got some marketing to do and my husband—you don't know that man. If I walked home with a man he didn't know and he saw me—well, it wouldn't be safe, that's all."

So Jack Wilson walked part of the way home with Ethyl and they chatted about people they knew, plays they had seen, a new neighbourhood moving picture house.

When she had dismissed Wilson, Ethyl hurried into the nearest delicatessen shop, bought some cold sliced tongue, some potato salad, baked beans in a little tin—one of the "specialties" of that particular shop—a few pickles and olives, a slice of raisin cake.

Andrew was there, when she got into the apartment. She heard him moving about in the living room.

"Hello, dear," she called carelessly.

Andrew didn't answer.

She dropped her packages on the dining-room table and hurried in to him.

"What's the matter, dear, not feeling well?"

She looked at his face. It was dark with anger, but there was something else there, too, a sort of triumph.

Ethyl looked at him, amazed.

"Whatever's the matter, Andrew?" she asked.

"You—you," he sputtered, and pointed a finger at her.

She giggled. He couldn't be as angry as he looked. He must be fooling.

"What has got into you? What are you making faces for? And pointing at me? Cat got your tongue?"

Andrew grew a trifle calmer.

"Where were you, to-day, Ethyl?" he asked, slowly.

"Me? Where was I? Why, I went to Lucy McGibney's to play bridge. I told you I was going."

"Tell me the truth. It's too late for lies."

"What do you mean? That is the truth."

"Then—you went no place else?"

Ethyl remembered Aunt Ida.

She'd forgotten that. Aunt Ida had

been kept out of sight so long. She knew how Andrew hated the mention of her name. Still, even at that, Andrew hadn't told her she couldn't go there, but only that he didn't want to see or hear of her.

"Well, what if I did?" she said, pouting.

"What if you did? My God!" he burst out, running his hands through his hair. "What if you did?—my wife—my wife—I should have known when I married you—gave you my name—a girl raised and born in the city—still, I trusted you, married you—"

"Andrew, have you gone crazy? I can go to see Aunt—Aunt Ida, if I want to, without you acting like this, can't I?"

"Aunt Ida," Andrew gave a strange, theatrical laugh. "Aunt Ida, that's good! To think of you trying to put a thing like that over on me. Aunt Ida—sounds like one of those stories you read about—wife tells her husband she's been visiting her aunt—later on, trusting husband finds out aunt's been dead two years. Yes, I know. You can't get away with that—not with me."

"Andrew, you're not in earnest. You don't think—why—I did go to see Aunt Ida, really."

"Aunt Ida lives at the Clifton, I presume?" There was a sneer in the words.

"Why, of course. If you'd let me talk about her, you'd know that. Been there for six months, ever since Joe went to Denver—"

Andrew was in no mood for listening. He understood—now. The scales had been torn from his eyes. Hadn't he suspected, from the first? Only to-day, at noon, he had told himself that Ethyl had been born in New York, that she must be bad. It was when he had passed his former "rooms" in Madison avenue and had seen the little swing "For Rent" sign that the thought had come to him. "Another fool gone into matrimony," he had mused, but the memory of the little "For Rent" sign had remained. He had given up peace, freedom—for marriage. Such a marriage! Yet—hadn't he married a city woman? Well—now he knew the worst—this was the way out—and now Andrew knew that it was the way out he had been looking for all along.

Suddenly, Andrew's marriage became no longer a sea of mediocrity, of commonplaces, of annoying, middle-class relatives. It became metamorphosed into his worst suspicions. If marriage had been middle class, regular, that would have been all right, decent, respectable. But this—no, he had been fooled, tricked, all along. He had been the victim of a gigantic plot. He had been deceived into believing Ethyl a sweet innocent. She was what he had thought her from the first, a siren, a city girl, a deceiver. He was justified.

He picked up his hat from the table, walked toward the door.

"You—you city girl," he said, "you've found your match at last. You could fool me for a while, but evil comes out. I've been watching you, waiting. To-night I was near the Clifton and I remembered what I'd heard of its shady reputation, although you denied it at the time. I passed on the other side—and from the door came my wife—and her old friend, Jack Wilson—oh, I knew him all right, I'd had him pointed out to me when we were living there. My wife—another man—a shady hotel. They were laughing into each other's faces. And you try to put over that old stall—visiting Aunt Ida! I warned you what would happen if I ever doubted you. Some men would get violent. I'm not that sort. I'd leave a woman, that's all. I've been patient, hopeful, trusting, but there is one thing that is absolutely sure—you can't change human nature—environment and training always come out in the end."

Glowing with pleasant righteousness—a man with a deceiving siren wife whom he had left, in a dignified manner, after just cause—Andrew went out.

As he closed the door after him

mechanically, he reached for his watch. He remembered that the superintendent of the building in Madison Avenue was always around until eight. It was not quite seven. If he hurried, he could get down and talk with him before he left. Andrew hoped the rooms were on the third floor and that no one had taken them during the afternoon.

RATTLESNAKE MOUNTAIN FABLE

By Maxwell Bodenheim

AUGUST sauntered down the mountain-side
Dropping mottled, turbid wraiths of decay.
The air was like an old priest
Disrobing without embarrassment
Before the dark and candid gaze of night.
But these things brought no pause
To the saucily determined squirrel.
His eyes were hungrily upturned
To where the stars hung—icily clustered nuts
Dotting trees of solitude.
He saw the stars just over the horizon,
And they seemed to grow
On trees that he could reach.
So he scampered on, from branch to branch,
Wondering why the fairy nut-trees
Ran away from him.
But, looking down, he spied.
A softly wild-cheeked mountain pool,
And there a handful of fairy nuts
Bit into the indigo cupping them.
With a squeal of weary happiness
The squirrel plunged into the mountain pool,
And as he drowned within its soundless heart
The fairy nuts were jigging over him
Like the unheard stirring of a poem.

A GIRL'S first kiss is always innocent. If she is destined for a brilliant career the second will also seem so.

HEAVENLY SOPHISTS

By Maurice Lazar

MRS. PRIMROSE was tranquil during her husband's loosely woven and thunderously shouted tirade. She was familiar with most of his characteristics, having lived many years with him, and his phrases were wasted on her. But her familiarity could not check her sudden fright when he dragged a bulky revolver from his respectable frock-coat and shook it before Rockett's gusty nostrils.

"You dirty dog!" cried Primrose, who was an instructor in sociology at the university where Rockett lectured on Greek literature, "I'll show you that educated people have some principles. To compromise my wife this way! What a scandal! Couldn't you have refrained from dragging me into it! Did you have to force me to see what was going on? So callous—so shameless! No wonder people have been patronizing me. They knew! Oh, what shall I do? What will become of me?"

He shook the revolver again and kicked Rockett's shins.

"Shut up!" he said as his wife's eyes pleaded for sympathy. "I want no word from you. You have been very indiscreet. A wife owes her husband discretion above all else."

He aimed another kick at Rockett, who was moving toward the door, and delivered it with unexpected energy.

Rockett's footsteps were accelerated. The kick was repeated. Rockett began to run. He trotted awkwardly into the hallway and then upstairs to the floor above. He was pursued closely by Primrose. Floor followed floor and soon they reached the gravel roof of the apartment building.

Through the open door of the skylight Primrose galloped with lowered head toward Rockett and battered him down and sat upon his heaving abdomen. They occupied this singular position several moments before they could again breathe.

Still panting Rockett said:

"This is terribly ridiculous!"

The awesome distance from the complicated inhabitants of the restless city to the clear specks of light in the sky reminded Primrose of the microscopic quality of himself and his surroundings. The quiet night made him intensely conscious of his unhappiness.

"No," he said, "it's all very serious. You have made an ass of yourself. You have placed me in an embarrassing position. You used to be socially interested in my wife. But your egoism was too much for you. It caught fire from the sparks of her flattery. You could no longer restrain yourself. Your attentions to her became very obvious; your conduct was insolently reckless. Now the three of us are undone. How trivial seem the things that lead us to disaster! You are a shameless fellow."

"Be gracious, old man," Rockett pleaded. "This gravel pinches my back. We are innocent, your wife and I. Believe me! We shared nothing other than an intellectual companionship. Your wife is a good woman and an apt pupil. She enjoyed my discourses on literature."

"Ha! She did not need you for that. I was always ready to serve her intellectual requirements. But it is too late. I shall have to divorce her."

"Don't be absurd. Your wife is amazingly virtuous. She has been domesticated beyond measure and is a

sheep for modesty. You should hold yourself in debt to me. Please put up that revolver. It is a hideous thing for a man like you to be handling. Be grateful to me. Few women have been amused as I have amused Mrs. Primrose. Consider the result: she has refined her sense of humour."

"Refined!" Primrose shouted, "how high do you find yourself in the universal scheme? I feel like killing you. I really don't know what I shall do. Some day you will be done away with as Professor Corbell was. You remember him? He was an instructor in physiological chemistry but had more women in his classes than men. I imagine the men couldn't stand him. Like you, he was promiscuous—"

"That is not true," said Rockett. "Professor Corbell was never promiscuous in his relations with women, but variable. He was a profound man and his knowledge of physiology may have endowed his activities with colour and grace. He was familiar with the workings of Nature. That's why women liked him."

"Your assumption is false and disgusting. You can't know what women think of men like Corbell. You could never get their views of such men."

"I don't want their views," said Rockett. "Mine are sufficiently confusing. And my back hurts. Please get up and talk this over sensibly. You shouldn't speak of such things as women's views. That is a very foolish generalization. Women are personal and independent in keeping with their natures, as are most men unlike you. The intelligent women I have known have been naturally and unconsciously expedient and have never offended my delicate tastes with disquisitions on human conduct. And here are you, sitting on my middle, poking me with a revolver which you dare not use and complaining of my generous regard for your wife. Your mind is rich with misconceptions. Your complaints are vulgar. They betray your ignorance of the laws of attraction by which life is incessantly renewed. It's bad enough for us all that most human creatures obfuscate those laws of attraction with their moral classifications, without having a fairly intelligent person like yourself to help mortify the good cause of knowledge."

"By 'laws of attraction' you refer to your misconduct with my wife?" Primrose inquired grimly.

"Admirable. You not only witness but confirm my opinion of you. But why use the term 'misconduct'?" And Rockett sighed happily.

"Weren't you kissing my wife when I came in?"

"You shouldn't have come then. You should have come home later or earlier. Such details as the timeliness of your appearances can cause serious social upheavals. You should be more considerate of your wife. But joking done with, I was bidding Mrs. Primrose good-bye."

"You have found some other wife?"

"Don't be hasty. I was bidding her good-bye because she enjoyed the tales I read from the mythologies so very much that when I tried to explain their sources she became indignant. She wanted her scandal without intellectual trimmings—the misdeeds, so to speak, minus the moralizing. Instead of appreciating my learned but interesting explanations of the development of the ancient religions and mythologies she insisted upon having more stories like the one of Dercetis, the Assyrian goddess, who reproached herself for leading astray a nice young man and threw herself into a lake after giving birth to Semiramis. When I think of it, it is I who should complain, not you. Here I go and devote my efforts towards the broadening of Mrs. Primrose's views of life and for my pains I get into trouble. Of course Mrs. Primrose was attentive and all that. But her sympathies were unintelligent; they didn't go very far. It seems to me that most women are characterized by their limitations rather than their—"

"Oh, dry up! You are a nincompoop when it comes to sociology," said Primrose, "and know nothing, as I told

you before, of what women think. Your generalizations plainly show how blind you are to the forces that govern human society, so go right on and strengthen my contempt for you."

"I was about to point out," Rockett continued calmly, "that most women can be classified in so far as they make the pleasures of life tolerable, as witty, wise, ugly, comely, intellectual, vulgar, discreet, and sometimes, but rarely, intelligent."

"Unquestionably you are a profound ass!" cried Primrose, "and I can waste no more time on you. First you tell me not to generalize about women and then you go ahead and do so. You are a disgrace to the reputable name of society and if these were the days when manslaughter was common, I should unhesitatingly kill you. Your explanations of your conduct with my wife, or I should say misconduct, are incredible. Now my married life is a farce. I shall have to simulate an affection for my wife—"

"She won't notice the difference," Rockett interjected.

—"and respect her, although it will be very hard for me to do."

"By all means keep things as they were before," said Rockett, arising painfully from the gravel the moment Primrose stood up. "Live up to your moral code, for it is far more important that you remain a man of principle than that you stray enjoyably from the road of exemplary social conduct."

"I'm not ashamed of my obligations to people," said Primrose. "Maybe that's why I'm so stupid."

"Undoubtedly," said Rockett.

"And being stupid, I can't fathom my wife's purpose in speaking disdainfully of you. She did that frequently, now that I think of it."

"Then you should have become suspicious of me long before this," said Rockett. "Your wife is comely. Lacking practically all the other virtues, she was obliged to resort to the most obvious subterfuges. It is very common for some women to deride the men whose welfare they secretly worry over. I don't know whether you get my meaning, but one of the stories that Mrs. Primrose enjoyed told the experiences of Queen Hippolyte, wife of Acastus, king of Iolchos, who accused Peleus, their guest, of making violent demonstrations of affection for her simply because he had disdained her own overtures to him.

"Now don't get excited," continued Rockett hastily; "Hippolyte was an awful sneak and had a private grievance against her husband. Possibly that's why she is said to have been witty."

"Well, I'm sorry my wife wasn't sufficiently sympathetic," said Primrose. "After all, the entire matter is hardly worth a second thought."

"Not even a first," said Rockett.

Mrs. Primrose laughed just then. She startled both men, for they had been unaware of her presence.

"I felt sure you would shoot him," she said wistfully, to her husband, "but I suppose I'm not worth killing a man for."

"I should say not," said Primrose uncomfortably, as he handed Rockett a cigar.

Mrs. Primrose regarded the men with much amusement.

She smiled cynically.

"I heard every word of your conversation. I followed you both and stopped at the skylight stairs."

"Did he tell the truth regarding you?" inquired Primrose.

"Well, he forgot to say that I found him not at all exciting," she said.

Primrose laughed.

"But you agree with me, don't you?" Rockett asked mournfully.

"Come down to tea," said Mrs. Primrose. "You are a pair of fools."

THE YEARS AHEAD

By Muna Lee

A LONG time ago Emily Scott had ceased to expect happiness through herself; it was for that reason perhaps that she dreamed confidently of an abundance of joy through her children; especially through Marjorie. The girl, touched with the wonder of youth, was amazingly unlike her mother in appearance; only the mother herself realized how like they were in reality and only the mother remembered how, through the difficult unlovely years of Marjorie's sickly babyhood she had comforted herself with the thought,

"She will repay me for all this sometime—when she is my big girl—"

The years while Marjorie was growing up had been scarcely less difficult. Life was hard at every point in that rough country to which they had pursued an elusive promise of fortune or an elusive longing for change, for more vivid life—Olin Scott himself hardly knew which—and Emily was too busy trying to soften the rigours of circumstance for her children to question much or to philosophize at all.

Marjorie did not make the struggle easier, as a little girl. She was not one of the round, merry, kissable children who are playful and comforting as a puppy. She was not even a pleasant child; shy, intensely reserved, apt to give way to passions of anger, distrustful of other children and distrusted by them, hers was hardly a happy childhood. She found her one delight in reading, in reading as savagely and as ill-consideredly as a starving man eats; devouring whatever book came to her hand, then snatching at another.

Sometimes Emily was glad that her child could plunge herself into other worlds than this of sticky clay streets and cramped wooden houses and never quite enough food at any meal; sometimes it troubled her; and it troubled her deeply one day to find Marjorie poring over a huge mail-order catalogue, pencil in hand.

"These are the things I'll get when I grow up," she explained in answer to her mother's questioning look. "We'll have curtains for the windows then and plenty of cups— I love catalogues!"

"Don't let them make you unhappy," Emily cautioned gravely; and afterwards, picking up the order blank scrawled over in the angular childish hand, she read with blurred eyes the list marked "For Mother": gloves, a bath-robe, a blue velvet suit, a garnet brooch.

The hard years did not seem to harm Marjorie so much as her mother had feared: growing older, she lost much of her painful shyness and most of her distrust, and she even developed a surprising slender, dark-eyed attractiveness. The cramped, uncomfortable house remained cramped and uncomfortable: there was still nowhere to receive callers except in one of the two bedrooms; but on the occasions when Marjorie's turn came to entertain the Sunday-school class, Emily took down the bed, moved in a table from the kitchen, and spent the entire morning in toiling over cookies and blanc-mange. Her eyes began to fail by the time she was thirty-two from sitting up late at night to work on a dress that must be finished for a party, for a school exercise, for Easter—not always Marjorie's

dresses now, for the other children were growing too; and Emily wasted much of her sight even on little Ada's clothes. She did not mind. Her children had so little that she was fiercely proud to give them herself—but it remained Marjorie to whom she looked most for repayment.

"When she is my big girl—" she would repeat to herself, old age looming ahead of her as a state of rest, of security, of blessed inaction.

She hoped frankly that Marjorie would not marry. She herself had found little actual happiness in marriage. Remembering Olin Scott as he had been at twenty-five, an eager impetuous lover in white flannels whose wooing had dazzled her into a tremulous certainty that happiness lay just ahead; viewing him dispassionately as he was now, honest, well-intentioned, ineffectual, the victim of a world in which he had too much faith; Emily doubted that any marriage could bring happiness to her child; and she craved happiness for Marjorie. That would atone for her own life; for poverty, and for work that had overtaxed her strength, and for deprivation upon senseless deprivation. If it must be, let her marry; but Emily was glad when Marjorie seemed not to care for the high school boys about whom her friends chattered, nor to find other company so interesting as her books, that amazing heterogeneous assembly in which "The Wandering Jew," "The Story of an African Farm," "Middlemarch," and Jean Ingelow's poems were the favourites.

Emily was never quite sure whether or not Marjorie enjoyed her girlhood. Contrasting it with her own, she believed Marjorie must be the happier in spite of the unchanging poverty into which dreams ran as into a blind alley. Emily's parents had died when she was too small to remember them. There had been no relatives; barely money enough to place her in a colourless, barn-like boarding-school where she spent year after year in sensitive loneliness. It was in the boarding-school that she had met Olin Scott's cousin, and, through her, Olin Scott himself. Marriage had followed—and deepening poverty—and the increasing faith that she would realize the happiness of life among her children when they were grown and she might rest.

The fear which had visited her sometimes in Marjorie's childhood, the chilling disbelief of life which engendered an apprehension that there might prove to be disappointment in the child's own nature—a fear induced by that unchildish reserve and those unchildish rages—passed entirely as the girl grew older. Marjorie was fine-fibred and sweet and true, of a most unusual quality—a quality that only her mother's heart appreciated, Emily told herself, half-sad and half-proud. She and her daughter became all things to one another—above all, they were friends; and in that friendship Emily felt that the fulfilment of her dream was at hand.

After all, it was like Marjorie to fall in love swiftly and irrevocably. Realizing the fact, Emily realized its inevitableness, realized that she should have foreseen it: and by a supreme and stern self-mastery, she was even able to be glad in Marjorie's gladness, to believe in the happiness ahead of her child as Marjorie herself believed in it; as she too had believed when Olin Scott whispered in the moonlight of a forgotten autumn.

Circumstances seemed to unite in favouring Marjorie's chances for happiness: Jim was strong and big and gentle, with an appreciation of Marjorie's fineness of spirit which won Emily's love, and he was able to give Marjorie all those things which her mother had longed she might have during that poverty-narrowed girlhood. Emily was even able to face bravely the prospect of living half across the continent from Marjorie.

"We'll send for you every summer," Jim told her tenderly as her own son might have done, "and some day we'll arrange matters so that we shall all be together."

With that joy in prospect, Emily thought of the hard years behind, of

the promise of the years ahead, and wondered self-reproachfully, that she could have doubted life.

"It will be worth it all," she said to herself tenderly—"My big girl—"

It was before the summer which was to have been crowned with that first promised visit that Marjorie died; died leaving her baby a few days old. Grief did not crush Emily; she could not have the luxury of giving way to grief. After all, there were her other children, whom she loved, with their ceaseless demands upon her time and strength. In the stricken sleeplessness of the first nights after Jim's despairing telegram, one gleam of solace came to her:

"Perhaps Jim will let me take care of Marjorie's baby," she said to herself. "Perhaps she will grow up to seem like Marjorie—"

THE GAME

By Babette Deutsch

YOUR gaiety is the flash of a thousand candles,
The height of a high old chamber, dimly bright:
Among fine shifting screens of eyes and voices,
A visible darkness that looms on the sense like light.

Is it your wit like a coloured ball between us—
Tossed and rolling, lifted and swung and caught—
Is it your wit or your wisdom that keeps us playing,
Still as despair, and livelier than thought?

THE EVIL DOERS

By John F. Lord

BOTH created untold agony for the human race; both sent many people to the asylums nervous wrecks; both increased many fold the unpleasantness of city life. Their works were dissimilar and yet alike. They could not exist without each other. One manufactured pianos. The other pianists.

HONEYMOONS

By June Gibson

ONCE

SHE was on her honeymoon.
She was smooth of cheek and demure of gaze.

Dainty lace-edged pantaloons peeped from below her hooped skirt.

Beneath a wide hat drooping with pink roses her eyes fell upon John talking to a beautiful woman in shimmering green.

"Who is that lady in green?" she asked.

"She is married," they said.

"Oh," she breathed, and taking a bit of embroidery from her bag, with a smile on her face, she waited for John.

NOW

She was on her honeymoon.

She was smooth of cheek and demure of gaze. Her gown was blue coloured to match her eyes and designed to cuddle her figure. Beneath a wide hat drooping with pink roses her eyes fell upon John talking to a beautiful woman in shimmering green.

"Who is that lady in green?" she asked.

"She is married," they said . . .

"Oh," she said, narrow-gazed, and darting across the lawn she caught hold-of her husband's arm.

"John, come with me," she said.

NIGHT

By Jean Allen

TO-NIGHT, I think the Gods in revelling
Spilled their wine,
And dyed the sunset sky
Orange to deepest crimson.
A black bird,
Dark against the blue,
Yearns towards his Love.
The low slim crescent moon.
The pine trees
Lean to their Lover wind;
A white moth lingers near the light;
Each one has his own.

But I . . .
Only the want of you
Who are so far.

LE CAS DE M. PATERNE

By Henri Allorge

M. JUSTE PATERNE était le modèle des chefs de bureau et le modele des époux.

Malgré une myopie très accentuée et un caractère un peu distrait, il était si consciencieux et si vraiment doué pour les choses administratives qu'on l'appréciait et l'estimait beaucoup au ministère des Affaires Incohérentes, où il dirigeait l'important service des *Pensions et secours aux Victimes de la littérature.*

Mais il avait deux grands chagrins: le premier était causé par son prénom, qu'il trouvait inharmonieux et ridicule; comme cet Athénien de jadis qui n'aimait pas Aristide, il était ennuyé d'entendre toujours cette épithète Juste inévitablement—hélas!—accolée à son propre nom, Mais à cela nul remède! Il n'avait pas d'autre prénom.

Son second grand chagrin était causé par la jalousie de sa femme, Eudoxie. Car Mme. Paterne était palouse, d'une jalousie féroce, et persécutait cruellement son pauvre et innocent époux.

Comme un esprit prévenu découvre toujours des faits qui semblent donner raison à ses soupçons, la vie conjugale était devenue peu agréable, et fertile en querelles.

M. Juste Paterne, quoi qu'il fût d'un naturel patient, en était excédé. Ce qui le vexait le plus, c'était la conscience de n'avoir absolument rien à se reprocher.

Etre un mari volage et passer pour un homme vertueux, cela est agréable, sinon louable; mais être un époux fidèle et avoir la réputation d'un coureur, c'est ridicule et gênant.

Cela attirait à notre héros des aventures du genre de celle-ci.

Un soir, ayant constaté que son canif était endommagé (ce n'était pourtant pas qu'il en eût donné des coups dans le contrat), M. Paterne résolut d'en acheter un autre, qui fût, autant que possible, de bonne qualité en même temps que de prix modique. A cet effet, il parcourut en flânant la plus animée des rues qui conduisaient de son ministère à son domicile privé.

Il s'arrêta devant un étalage où s'offraient aux regards différentes fournitures de papeterie, voisinant avec des peignes, des épingles, des savons, des échantillons de parfumerie et autres "objets de menue consommation courante," comme on dit dans l'administration, en écarquillant, ses gros yeux, atteints, comme je l'ai dit, d'une myopie considérable.

La demoiselle de magasin, voyant qu'il semblait regarder des vaporisateurs, se fit engageante:

— Voyez! monsieur, les jolis vaporisateurs! pas chers, vraiment? n'est-ce pas? et solides, vous savez? Ils ne se détraquent jamais.

— Ce n'est pas cela, murmura M. Paterne timidement.

— Vous n'en trouverez pas de meilleurs: je vous le garantis . . .

— Non, répliqua-t-il, je voudrais . . .

— Je vois ce que c'est; vous voulez avant tout vous assurer du fonctionnement de l'appareil; rien n'est plus aisé; vous jugerez en même temps de la qualité de nos parfums.

Et la vendeuse experte, saisissant un vaporisateur garni d'une quelconque

peau d'Espagne, submergea M. Juste Paterne sous un nuage épais d'odorants effluves.

Epouvanté, il recula, criant presque :

— Mais non ! je cherche un canif !

— Ah ! que ne le disiez-vous, monsieur !

Et, non sans peine, l'acheteur parfumé malgré lui put acheter ce qu'il voulait.

Il partit mécontent, en s'éventant avec son mouchoir, afin de faire disparaître le parfum, s'il se pouvait.

Il n'avait pas remarqué qu'une dame, qui choisissait tout près de lui, du fil de diverses couleurs, lui en avait laissé tomber quelques échantillons sur le dos.

Puis il tira de sa poche le canif flambant neuf, pour l'examiner tout en marchant—dangereuse imprudence.

En effet, tout à coup il se heurta à une grande palissade qui entourait un échafaudage, tandis qu'une notable quantité de plâtre en poudre et de poussière blanche le recouvrait, ce qui nécessita de nouveau l'usage du mouchoir.

— Va donc ! eh ! abruti, lui cria un voyou qui passait. Monsieur désire-t-il un caniche pour le conduire ?

Enfin il se trouva devant sa porte et respira, — hélas ! pas pour longtemps. Car, à peine eut-il franchi le seuil de son appartement, que Mme. Paterne, reniflant l'air, l'apostropha rudement.

— D'où viens-tu donc ?

— Mais, bobonne, commença-t-il . . .

— Ma parole, tu empestes la parfumerie.

Et elle le regarda de plus près . . .

— Mais tu es tout blanc . . . De la poudre de riz, parbleu. Et tu es couvert de bouts de fil . . . Inutile de demander d'où tu viens.

L'époux calomnié voulut protester, mais en vain.

Pan ! une maitresse giffle foudroya la joue de l'innocent, mais infortuné mari, et Mme. Paterne disparut, en prononçant des mots de " divorce," de " pauvre victime " et autres de même nature.

Resté seul, M. Juste Paterne, un peu blasé sur ces scènes violentes, s'assura qu'il avait bien en poche le canif qu'il avait acheté, puis, se dit :

— Bah ! je ne suis pas le premier qu'on accuse injustement, et ne serai pas le dernier. Ainsi va le monde !

Et, pour donner à son ennui un salutaire dérivatif, il se mit à confectionner tout un lot de petites cocottes en papier.

MY DREAMS

By Paul Tanaquil

MY dreams are the flickering shadows that dead leaves cast over the face of tombs when the wind blows.

HANDSOME MEN

NOTHING so improves personal appearance as that slight smooth tan which comes with exposure to the sun and air.

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gives a perfect simulation of this tint, is undetectable, perfectly harmless, and absolutely genuine, to which its 5,000 testimonials received from every quarter of the globe is sufficient evidence Unique in method and perfection of result, SUNBRONZE DE LUXE has stood the **TEST OF TIME.** Forwarded free from observation, price **10/6** (*Mark II de Luxe*, **3 guineas**). Fresh Complexion Tint for Ladies, on same principle, at same prices. Direct from

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POMEROY DAY CREAM is, of all "vanishing" creams, the most delightful. It has a lovely effect on the skin and is so fragrant and refreshing that one wants to be using it always. Being non-greasy and vanishing it can be used any time, any day. The more one uses it, the better for the skin, which is rendered soft, smooth, and fresh, and is protected against wind and weather.

Pomeroy Day Cream

In dainty half-crown vases, at high-class Chemists, Perfumers, &c., &c.

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RHEUMATISM AND GOUT.

MR. HORATIO BOTTOMLEY PAYS HIS "RESPECTS" TO THE GERMAN SPAS.

Some candid advice to sufferers from any Uric Acid complaints, Stomach, Liver and Kidney disorders, etc. Says saltrated water to his mind (and body) beats Carlsbad into a cocked hat.

There is no mystery about the medicinal ingredients which give such wonderful curative powers to the waters of various natural medicated springs. Their exact nature and quantities were ascertained by chemical analysis long ago, and these "saltrates" or constituent mineral elements, artificially but accurately reproduced, can be obtained as a standard refined compound from any chemist. It is only necessary to dissolve the powder in water, and you have a curative drink which is more convenient, much less expensive, always fresh, and far more pure and palatable than water at the natural spas. (Certain bad-tasting iodides and other undesirable impurities are eliminated in the refining.)

Some time ago Mr. Bottomley, a frequent visitor to the German spas in pre-war days, was persuaded to try a course of saltrated water as an efficient substitute. The extremely gratifying results are best explained by the following characteristic letter which the famous editor wrote to a London firm of manufacturing chemists and saltrates refiners:—

> "Now that all German spas are taboo, may I congratulate you on your Alkia Saltrates and Reudel Bath Saltrates, which to my mind (and body) beat Carlsbad into a cocked hat. In future, with your help, I shall certainly support home industries by taking my cure on the spot."

Horatio Bottomley

NOTE.—Alkia Saltrates is a highly refined compound which produces medicinal drinking water. Probably unequalled in its power to cure serious liver, kidney or intestinal disorders, and considered by many eminent authorities to be the best anti-rheumatic agent or blood purifier and eliminant of uric acid known to medical science at the present time. It is also widely prescribed by physicians for stomach disorders, such as hyperacidity, etc. It never irritates the kidneys or causes depressing after-effects as many salines, morning powders, and patent medicines do. The average dose is a level teaspoonful, or less, in a tumbler of water.

REUDEL BATH SALTRATES.—This compound exactly reproduces the ingredients of world-famous natural curative bathing spring waters, and of course is for external use only. The strongly medicated and oxygenated water stops even the worst rheumatic or gouty aches, pains, and stiffness within ten minutes. Its strongly antiseptic and healing qualities also render the curative water highly efficacious for any bad skin affections, such as eczema, etc. As a foot bath, a fairly strong solution quickly softens corns so the whole growth comes right out entire, leaving no core or root to grow again. The quantities usually prescribed are a small handful for a full bath or a tablespoonful for a strong foot-bath. Any good chemist would have these two standard and inexpensive saltrates compounds in stock.

ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Various Hands

Never has the country looked more beautiful, or provided more ideas in the way of colour schemes, for after all the true artist goes to nature for her inspirations.

One feels that the reason why cubism and violently futurist pictures failed to attract the general public, was that they clashed against nature. Even in the East, where glorious and brilliant colours are the rule, they are never crude, because there is always an atmosphere to soften the sharp tones and corners.

This rambling preface is merely a prelude to a very obvious truth, which is that, if we wish to be really beautifully and becomingly gowned, we must go to nature for our colour schemes. There is an infinite variety of choice, especially in the autumn, when rich reds and greens and yellows are linked up with dull blue mists and bronze shadows. Berberis is at its best at the moment, and, as a colour, what could possibly suit a dark woman better than a frock of that particular shade? Imagine it as a dinner dress in rich charmeuse, clinging closely to the figure and terminating in a little fish-tail to one side; and, as a concession to the mode of the day, the material is draped rather fully over one hip. A wide swathed belt of the same charmeuse is pulled tightly round the figure, terminating in large loops and ends towards the left of the back, the hip drapery and fish-tail being on the right, of course. The top, and the long hanging angel sleeves, are in cobwebby gold lace, very soft and fine, and the wearer should have a golden fillet in her dark hair. A pretty finish to such a frock would be shoes to match, with Louis heels of gold. There is a great feeling for contrasting coloured heels on black evening slippers: bright green or blue or aluminium are particularly effective on black satin shoes. Dance frocks are delightful, and luckily there is a great variety of them, as they will probably be very much in demand before long. Pannier effects are very charming in a ballroom, and one little frock that I have in mind was carried out in lavender taffetas—or rather, the lower half of the bodice and the pannier effects were in this material. You have only to think of a little Dresden shepherdess to get the outline of the skirt, which is bunched up at the sides; and the taffetas near the hem is rolled back, with blue taffetas showing an under-dress and front width of filmy lace *volants*. The shepherdess idea is even carried out in the little bunches of flowers hidden carelessly here and there. The bodice consists of a straight swathing of the lavender taffetas, headed by filmy lace, which is threaded with blue ribbons. The shoulder-straps are of lace, and the sleeves are conspicuous by their absence. One shoulder curl, and mittens, carried out the old-world effect; and the lavender satin shoes had heels of blue and large paste buckles. It seems to be the correct thing to carry a fan, consisting of one or two long, dissipated-looking glycerine feathers—though what use these can be, beyond being a splendid way to annoy "the other woman" by catching it in her hair, it is hard to conceive. It is just one of those foolish whims for which women are noted, and which no doubt completes their charm. Another very new note is the trimming made of rose petals, and a very pretty conceit it is.

Think of a débutante's dance-frock made of many layers of white tulle, all just gossamer daintiness, and half-way up the *bouffant* skirt a sober little line of pink velvet rose-petals, one overlapping the other, retrieving the frock from insipidity.

The shoulder straps are also of petals, and a long trail of roses with their leaves commences at the waist, and falls almost to the hem of the skirt. White silk stockings and the palest rose satin shoes are needed, and perhaps a bandeau of petals—but this must be left to the discretion of the wearer.

Evening cloaks are very sumptuous affairs, the nicest being in chiffon brocade in some rich colouring.

THE IDEAL XMAS GIFTS

To those who at this season are beginning to think about Christmas and Christmas gifts, there is a prac-

The MAGIC ART of BEAUTY CULTURE

SOME HOME RECIPES.

BY MIMOSA.

A complexion that appears clear, fresh and natural, is as necessary to the smart woman as a modish gown. More attention should be given to keeping the skin "fit" than to the details of dress. The face, constantly exposed to the wind, dust, fatigue and strain requires regular and watchful care. One great cause of complexion troubles is the frequent use of greasy, inactive preparations which clog the pores and prevent the natural throwing off of waste matter. My repeated advice is to avoid made-up cosmetics and to use only pure ingredients. The various aids to beauty which I recommend are simple, and if not already at hand, can be procured from any reliable chemist. If he has not what you require, he can easily obtain it for you. Only let me advise you to insist on having the original ingredients and not to accept some made-up preparation instead.

About Shampoos.—To quote an eminent London beauty specialist: "The slimy egg cannot dissolve the scalp impurities, but only adds to the trouble by completely choking the pores with animal matter." The substance sticks, decomposes, thereby causing the hair to assume a dead "dull colour." I heartily endorse every word. Avoid eggs (and soap too) on your hair. Try the delightful preparation made by stirring a teaspoonful of stallax in a cup of hot water. It will bring out new beauty possibilities in your hair, will clear and prevent dandruff, and leave that fine fluffy effect so much sought after. It also removes excess oil or greasiness.

Complexion Secrets of an Actress.—In a recently issued volume bearing the above title, the author says: "Continual use of grease paints, rouge and the like, has ruined my complexion. My skin was colourless, wrinkled, coarse and punctured with large pores. In America I heard of the virtues of mercolised wax; my first experience of this marvellous substance convinced me it was more valuable than all the cosmetics combined. Now, whenever my complexion begins to go wrong, I get a small quantity of mercolised wax from the chemists, spread on a thin layer of it before retiring, washing it off in the morning. The wax, after a few such applications, seems literally to absorb the worn out cuticle, when a brighter, healthier, younger looking skin appears."

Face Fuzz.—Many women know how to remove superfluous hair temporarily, but to banish it for ever is quite another matter. As regards depilatories, I must say that there are very few good ones. They nearly all irritate the skin and even then only give temporary relief. Powdered pheminol acts in a wonderful manner, and the recommended treatment is designed not only to immediately remove the ugly hairs, but to also permanently destroy the roots.

Scanty Eyebrows and Lashes.—What a wealth of expression can be given to an otherwise plain face, by fine arching eyebrows, and long curling lashes. Much care should be exercised, however, in choosing a pomade for promoting the growth of either, as it is practically impossible to keep the lids tightly closed when treating the lashes. Mennaline has the advantage of being perfectly harmless, and at the same time a healthy stimulant to the hair follicles. Its use tends to darken the new growth which presumably is what most women desire.

Is Powder Necessary?—I say emphatically, No! There is a simple lotion which can be easily and cheaply made at home and it is at the same time both effective and beneficial to the complexion. Cleminite is a splendid substitute for face powder, which is at the bottom of many complexion troubles. Get about an ounce from the chemists and dissolve in four tablespoonsful of water. The result is a fine clear liquid, which instantly gives the face, neck, or arms that peach-like bloom of perfect health. There is nothing to equal it for greasy skins, and the result lasts all day long under the most trying conditions. Try it for the next dance.

Falling Hair.—How often one hears the lament, "I have tried everything on the market, and my hair comes out in handfuls." Not so surprising either when you come to think it over. Hair tonics to be effective must be fresh, and there is no earthly reason why every woman should not make her own lotion at home. The finest vegetable tonic I know of is made by mixing a packet of boranium with ½ pint of bay rum and adding sufficient water to fill a half-pint bottle. This lotion rubbed briskly into the scalp sets the hair roots tingling with new life, and will, if persevered with, give you back your "crowning glory."

For Pale Faces.—Some folks are naturally pale and I see no harm whatever in adding a little colour to the cheeks if so desired. Rouge, however, is always obvious, and to people of refinement somewhat vulgar. There is a substance, however, known as powdered colliandum, which gives a perfectly natural colour, and at the same time defies detection. Apply a little with the finger tips. You will be pleased with the result I feel sure.

PARKER BELMONT'S CLYNOL BERRIES FOR OBESITY.—[ADVT.]

tically new field open for the choice of seasonable presents. A visit to the establishment of Messrs. Emerson, Ltd., of the Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly, will amply repay the time so spent. Mr. Emerson specializes in wrist-watches, in all shapes and to suit all purses; oval, oblong, square, and round watches figure in the windows, and instead of these watches having the usual more or less unsightly leather straps for the wrist, they have silk wristlets, which can be obtained to match the colours of the frock, and so follow the latest fashion. The fastenings of these silk wristlets are quite simple to manipulate, and they can easily be taken on and off by the wearer, and so it is quite possible to have, say, half a dozen different silk wrist-straps, of as many colours, to suit the costume of the wearer.

"SHERRYS"

The old Skating Rink in West Street, Brighton, has been redecorated regardless of cost and is now known as "Sherrys," where you can Jazz on one of the best floors in England. Judging from a look in there one Saturday, it seems to be the playroom of Society and the Stage. Owing to the excellent management, one can take one's family. The Services are well represented, and it would be hard to find a more cheery crowd than at the new "Sherrys" in West Street, Brighton.

INCOME INCREASING AUTHORSHIP

A very interesting, most useful, new, and up-to-date guide has recently been published by A. Acklande, of Scarborough. The author, Mr. R. A. H. Goodyear, has struck a happy note in putting on the market in such a concise and understandable form his brochure on income increasing authorship.

The author goes fully into the merits of one-act plays and recitations, book reviewing, and indeed gives most valuable information and useful advice to those who wish to make money by their pen.

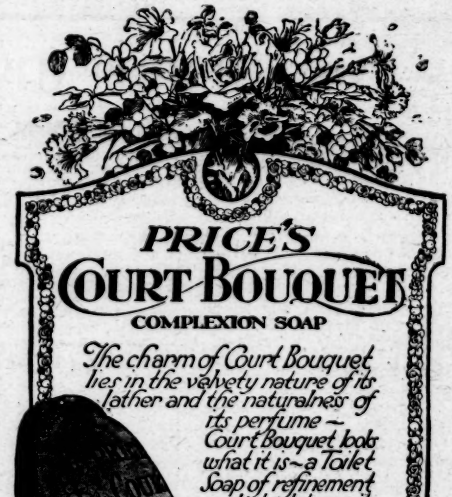
Particulars of the neglected treasury of provincial publications are gone into at length.

Old furniture—ginger for sporting editors—and many other kindred subjects are touched upon and hints given as to the best way to use them for writing purposes.

Other pamphlets from the same author's pen, such as "Golden Hints for Writers," "The Writer's Brain Book," etc., can be obtained from the same publisher, price 8d. each.

A NECESSARY PRECAUTION

It is natural—and right—at the present time, that every woman should give a little extra consideration to her personal appearance. Worry inevitably leaves its unpleasant mark on the face, in the shape of furrows, etc., but Mrs. Adair, the Beauty Specialist, of 92, New Bond Street, has made a special study of facial appearance, and has the happy knack of making everybody look handsome. A visit to her establishment assures one of this, but, according to the number of testimonials she receives, her home treatments are extremely beneficial for those who cannot pay her a visit. Mrs. Adair is always pleased to make an appointment with anyone interested.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SIMPLEX

INVITES the patronage of all who desire to retain pleasant memories of the Park meetings—or any other meeting in which they may be interested.

There are some who are prejudiced against the idea of receiving advice about racing—but why? If you know a friend in the City—one who is in intimate touch with the right people—do you not simply yearn to ask him to tell you what he knows? Of course you do, and just as the ordinary speculator or investor needs sound advice to guide him in his operations, so does he (or she) who takes a speculative interest in racing.

And why not have it? If you want advice on law, you go to a man of legal experience to get it; if you want advice on your health, you go to an expert for it, so why not seek the advice of an expert at racing? I have owned many winners, and I get to know the business intended by a good many stables, which knowledge, combined with experience and good judgment, and the fact that I spare no outlay and no trouble which will bring WINNERS, necessarily results in profit, both to myself and to those who patronise me.

Now, the first thing to remember is this—It is of no use backing horses every day just for the sake of having a bet. The only sure way to success is to *wait*, to wait until something really reliable comes along, and that is my part of the business, and I observe it strictly. I cannot and *will not* wire every day.

Another thing is, to unalterably confine your operations to *one horse*, and never more under any circumstances whatever. Then, by following these occasional items of genuine information, strictly one horse, you can absolutely rely on beating your bookmaker, and I want you to accept my help, for I know that I can win money for you regularly.

If you are attending any meeting, or if you are staying at home and desire to take a speculative interest in any race-meetings, you cannot do better than patronise me, for I have the best men on the Turf working for me, I employ men who attend every meeting and travel the training quarters, ever on the search for winners, and I am confident that the profit of the season 1919 will surpass even that of past years. I lay no claim to infallibility, but I DO claim experience and judgment, which MUST be beneficial to my followers.

I supply the information each day that I advise anything to be done, my terms being the odds to two sovereigns each winner. Add £2 to your stake every time, and the profit of that £2 (as paid to you by your bookmaker) is what you pay me for each win, as my fee for the advice. Don't run away with the idea that the information is dear, for it is nothing of the sort. It is not what you pay for WINS that counts against you, but what you pay your bookmaker for losers, and you will win oftener than you will lose if you follow me. Moreover, the information will really cost you very little, if you add my fee to your own stake every time, as the only out-of-pocket cost to you is when the information loses, which is not often.

Intending followers must send four stamped and addressed forms (or their cost), with clear instructions for me to follow, and settle promptly for winners as due. No commissions are executed, but I can wire direct to the Agents of those who cannot personally attend to wires.

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MOTORS AND MOTORING

By W. Whittall

THE OLYMPIA SHOW

All roads lead to Olympia nowadays —at least, for the motorist. We have with us the thirteenth of the series of Motor Shows organized by the Society of Motor Manufacturers, and in consequence of the fact that there has been an interval of six years since the last exhibition the public interest this year is really abnormal. We have been used in years past to see Olympia overcrowded to the point of suffocation, but the Show of 1919 will go down to history as having easily beaten all previous records in point of attendance. However, the reader does not expect of me that I should waste his time and my space in setting down impressions of the Show that he can, and probably by this time has, gathered for himself. Rather will he desire that I should say something about the changes and developments that are being demonstrated to have come about as a result of the war experience of the motor manufacturer, and of those to whom has been entrusted the running of his vehicles on war service.

We have been told that in the main we need not expect to see much of change in designs—that the alleged new models we should see at Olympia would merely be 1914 types in a more or less new dress, modified and brought up to date and labelled "1920." If anyone should still aver thus, tell him he does not know of what he is talking. It may be true that the sum total of progress, taken all round, is not so great as would have been the case had there been no war—of that I cannot speak, nor anyone else for that matter. We have not by any means got away from what we considered the conventional designs of 1914, but even so it is pertinent to ask why we should. They were to the full satisfactory to the user, which is all one can ask of the car—or all one need ask. I would not have it thought that I am non-progressive in these matters—quite the contrary; but I prefer the proved things of to-day rather than the experiments of to-morrow.

It is really too early yet to pass a considered judgment on the trend of things as demonstrated at the Show. I should say it was in the direction of keeping to the beaten track, in so far as the essentials are concerned, and seeking improvement in details. For instance, it is in my recollection that, at the Show of 1913, there was but one British car in which the electric engine starter was fitted as a part of the standard equipment. I have yet to find one that is not so equipped. Again, in 1913, if you wanted your car electrically lit, you had, in all but the most expensive cars, to reckon upon your installation as an "extra." Now even the lightest of light cars is complete with its own dynamo set.

A REALLY FINE CAR

Let us take as an example of those who have kept to the conventions the makers of the Sizaire-Berwick. I cannot see in this undoubtedly fine car any traces of the aero-fetish. It is as it was before the war, save that it has been vastly refined in detail. In appearance it has nothing but a radiator of improved shape and design to mark it out from its predecessors, yet it is far from being the same car, even though the uninitiated would regard it as being unchanged. I myself, though I knew the pre-war Sizaire-Berwick rather intimately, should not like to have to point out exactly wherein the differences lie; but the reader may accept it that they are there, and that it is a very much better car than was the pre-war type, good car as it was.

I see no particular changes in American designs. True, the Americans are sending us more cars of the six-cylinder type—nearly all their prominent firms seem to have been converted to the "six"—but they offer nothing startling in changed designs. The new Chandler is typical of the trend of things. Quite conventional, it is a very good car, and I imagine it will command a ready sale among that wide class which wants a full-powered car at a moderate price. Those whose ambitions run that way might do far worse than see this new-comer to the English market.

OUT & AWAY

THE PUBLISHERS of "Out & Away" are compelled to announce that owing to difficulties in transport their supplies of paper will not arrive in time to enable them to produce the October number until the end of Nov.

WILL Subscribers and all those who have ordered their copies in advance please note that the next issue will be brilliant with colour, as delightful and varied in literary talent as the first number. The price is still the same—2s. 6d.

THE Contributors include Max Pemberton, Barry Pain, Arthur Machen, W. Heath Robinson, J. A. Shepherd, A. St. John Adcock, Lily Brayton, G. A. B. Dewar, Bert Thomas, Noel Pocock, & Will H. Ogilvie.

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